

MUTAGENESIS OF *Aspergillus* FUNGI AND GENES ESSENTIAL FOR GROWTH

The present invention is directed to polynucleotides encoding proteins
5 Essential For the Growth (EFG) of filamentous fungi. The invention also deals with
namely polypeptides encoded by said polynucleotides, screening assays for
identifying compounds capable of inhibiting said EFG protein activities,
pharmaceutical or phytosanitary compositions comprising such compounds.

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BACKGROUND

The opportunistic pathogen *Aspergillus fumigatus* is the cause of the most
frequent deadly airborne fungal infection in developed countries. In order to identify
novel antifungal drug targets, the inventors investigated the genome of *A. fumigatus*
for genes that are necessary for efficient fungal growth.

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Aspergillus fumigatus is a saprophytic filamentous fungus that disseminates
through the release of asexual spores (conidia) into air^{1,2}. They are daily inhaled
without major consequences for human health. However, in immuno-compromised
hosts, *A. fumigatus* can cause a usually fatal infection, termed invasive pulmonary
aspergillosis^{1,3} (IPA). With the increasing number of immuno-deficient patients and
20 the development of severe immuno-suppressive therapies, *A. fumigatus* has become
the most prevalent airborne fungal pathogen⁴. Because of a difficult diagnosis during
lifetime and the lack of non-toxic efficient antifungal treatments, IPA is associated
with a mortality rate as high as 85%.

Currently available drugs belong to two families: polyenes (*e.g.*
25 amphotericin B) and azoles (*e.g.* itraconazole), both of them targeting fungal
membranes^{1,5}. Relative toxicity and side effects, in addition to an often-late
diagnostic, limit their use^{1,5}. Recently, new antifungal compounds of the candin
family (caspofungin) which target the enzyme responsible for cell wall $\beta(1,3)$ -glucan
biosynthesis came on the market⁶.

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Besides, *A. fumigatus* is closely related to phytopathogenic fungi. There is a high need of new fungicidal compounds against such fungi. Thus, EFG fungal genes identified by the inventors have a strong utility in the phytopathology field : the identified EFG genes are useful for identifying new fungicidal compositions in screening assays. Knowing the EFG described further, homologous genes of *A. fumigatus* can be isolated from other fungi, namely: *Botrytis cinerea*, *Mycosphaerella graminicola*, *Stagnospora nodorum*, *Blumeria graminis*, *Colleotrichum lindemuthianum*, *Puccinia graminis*, *Leptosphaeria maculans*, *Fusarium oxysporum*, *Fusarium graminearum*, *Venturia inaequalis*, most preferably *Magnaporthe* fungi, even more preferably *Magnaporthe grisea*.

A rational approach to increase the antifungal arsenal relies on the identification of novel targets involved in various aspects of the fungal biology^{7,8}. Although genes necessary for virulence are seen as potential candidates⁹, no genuine virulence factor has been identified in *A. fumigatus* yet^{2,10}. On the other hand, studies which have addressed the role of proposed virulence factors, e.g. adhesins, toxic secondary metabolites or secreted proteases, by direct mutagenesis have only identified genes involved in melanin biosynthesis necessary for conidia pigmentation as important for virulence^{2,37,38,39}. Therefore, it appears that the search for *A. fumigatus* virulence factors has only identified genes that protect conidia from the host response (pigment biosynthesis prevents complement binding and phagocytosis) and metabolic pathway genes (reduced level of an essential nutrient at the site of infection).

Alternative attractive antifungal targets lie among gene products that are essential for fungal growth *ex vivo*^{11,12}. Compendia of essential genes have been obtained for *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* through various approaches including systematic gene inactivation or insertional mutagenesis in a diploid background followed by the analysis of meiotic progenies^{13,14}. More recently, a set of genes critical for growth of the dimorphic yeast *Candida albicans* has also been defined using inducible expression of antisense RNA molecules¹⁵. Among the 86 *C. albicans* genes identified, 38% have no known homologues in available

databases¹⁵. Differences in essential biological processes between the yeasts *S. cerevisiae* and *C. albicans* highlight the need to study the larger and more complex filamentous fungal genomes to reveal species-specific and filamentous-specific targets.

5 *A. fumigatus* is haploid and devoid of a sexual cycle¹⁶, preventing the application of strategies that use classical genetics to define essential genes. The inventors have now demonstrated that the parasexual genetic cycle can be used to demonstrate the essential function of *A. fumigatus* genes. The inventors have used techniques of chemical haploidization of artificial diploid strains^{17,18}. In this
10 setting, a heterozygous *A. fumigatus* diploid is generated by targeted gene replacement or by random insertional mutagenesis and subjected to haploidization with or without the selective pressure corresponding to the introduced mutation. The absence of haploid progenies under selective condition only is indicative of the inactivation of a gene essential for *A. fumigatus* growth (Fig. 1). Using this approach,
15 the inventors have demonstrated that the *FKS1* gene, encoding the 1,3- β -D-glucan synthase catalytic subunit, and the *smcA* gene, encoding a member of the SMC (structural maintenance of chromosome) protein family, are essential for *A. fumigatus* growth. However, their results have shown that the currently used insertional mutagenesis schemes for *A. fumigatus* which rely on integration of a heterologous
20 DNA molecule by DNA-mediated transformation^{19,20} lead to frequent genomic rearrangements that hamper a high-throughput analysis (data not shown). So there was a need for new techniques allowing a reliable identification of EFG genes.

Transposon mutagenesis has been used widely in bacteria^{21,22} and yeasts^{23,24} to elucidate various biological questions but it was only very recently
25 that it has been applied to the filamentous fungus kingdom^{25,26}. In particular, the *impala160* transposable element from *Fusarium oxysporum*, a Class II transposable element of the *Tc1-mariner* family²⁷, has been shown to transpose efficiently in *Fusarium* species²⁸, *A. nidulans*²⁹ and *Magnaporthe grisea*³⁰. However, transposon mutagenesis has not been used yet for a reliable identification of genes essential for
30 growth of *Aspergillus* fungi, especially *A. fumigatus*. Such identification needs appropriated protocol settings and is absolutely not obvious, practically speaking.

Furthermore, as it will be shown, the EFG genes of *A. fumigatus* identified by the inventors were until now not known, and some of them are surprisingly totally specific for Aspergilli or for filamentous ascomycetes, being not found in ascomycetous yeasts. The new EFG genes from *A. fumigatus* described in this application are as such neither described nor suggested in the prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The inventors have succeeded in the identification of EFG genes, by using an *in vivo* transposon mutagenesis system for *A. fumigatus*. The inventors have shown that *impala160* (see FR 2 791 361) and its derivatives also transpose in *A. fumigatus* and can be used to generate a collection of random heterozygous diploids. Screening by parasexual genetics of such a collection has resulted in the complete characterization without prior sequence information of 210 new *A. fumigatus* genes which are necessary for efficient fungal growth.

The present invention thus pertains, according to a first aspect, to nucleic acid molecules, including in particular the complete cDNA sequence, encoding the EFG protein, as well as the corresponding translation product. Oligonucleotide probes or primers hybridizing specifically with a EFG genomic DNA or cDNA sequence are also part of the present invention, as well as DNA amplification and detection methods using said primers and probes.

A further aspect of the invention consists of recombinant vectors comprising any of the nucleic acid sequences described above, and in particular of recombinant vectors comprising a EFG regulatory sequence or a sequence encoding a EFG protein, as well as of cell hosts comprising said nucleic acid sequences or recombinant vectors.

The invention is also directed to methods for the screening of substances or molecules that inhibit the expression of the EFG genes, as well as with methods for the screening of substances or molecules that interact with and/or inhibit the activity of a EFG polypeptide.

Another object of the invention is to develop new compositions, either pharmaceutical or phytosanitarical, capable of inhibiting or preferably completely suppressing the toxic effect of filamentous fungi.

More precisely, the invention relates, according to a first aspect, to a nucleic acid encoding an Essential For Growth (EFG) polypeptide selected from the group consisting of :

(i) a nucleic acid molecule encoding a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence depicted in one of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114, 118,122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170 ;

(ii) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleic acid sequence as depicted in one of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112, 116,120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168 ;

(iii) a nucleic sequence having at least 80, 85, 90, 95, 98, 99% identity with a sequence of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112, 116,120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168 ;

(iv) a nucleic acid molecule which hybridizes under stringent conditions to
 (a) a nucleic acid as defined in (i), (ii) and (iii), or
 (b) a complementary strand of (a) ;

(v) a nucleic acid the sequence of which is degenerated as a result of the genetic code to the sequence of a nucleic acid as defined in (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

The invention also relates to an isolated nucleic acid, said nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding:

i) a EFG polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 80% identity to a sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118,122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170 ; or

ii) a biologically active fragment of said polypeptide.

The invention also relates to an isolated nucleic acid, said nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding:

- i) a EFG polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence which is orthologous to a sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118,122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170; or
- ii) a biologically active fragment of said polypeptide.

The invention also relates to an isolated nucleic acid sequence mentioned above encoding a polypeptide of *A. fumigatus* exhibiting a biological function associated to fungal growth, said nucleic acid comprising a sequence of SEQ ID N°2,5,8,14,17,20,23,26,29,32,35,38,41,44,47,50,53,56,59,93,97,101,105,109,113,117,121,125,129,133,137,141,145,149,153,157,161,165,169. The sequences of SEQ ID N°2,5,8,14,17,20,23,26,29,32,35,38,41,44,47,50,53,56,59,93,97,101,105,109,113,117,121,125,129,133,137,141,145,149,153,157,161,165,169 are issued respectively from the sequences of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, and are also defined as ORF N°2,5,8,14,17,20,23,26,29,32,35,38,41,44,47,50,53,56,59,93,97,101,105,109,113,117,121,125,129,133,137,141,145,149,153,157,161,165,169. For instance SEQ ID N°2 is ORF N°2, is issued from SEQ ID N°1, and encodes for the protein of SEQ ID N°3 ; SEQ ID N°5 is ORF N°5, is issued from SEQ ID N°4, and encodes for the protein of SEQ ID N°6.

ORF (open reading frame) are representative fragments of the EFG genes of the invention, between a start codon and a stop codon or between two stop codons encoding the EFG polypeptides of the invention.

The biological function associated to fungal growth is preferably chosen in the group consisting of protein synthesis, protein maturation, protein transport, nuclear architecture, RNA processing, nucleotide metabolism, chromatine structure, cell cycle control.

The invention also relates to said nucleic acid operably linked to a promoter, to an expression cassette comprising said nucleic acid, to a host cell comprising said expression cassette.

According to another aspect the invention relates to a biologically active polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid described above.

The invention also relates to a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of at least 80% amino acid sequence identity to a sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114, 118,122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170.

According to a further aspect, the invention relates to a method of identifying a candidate inhibitor of EFG polypeptide, said method comprising:

- i) contacting a EFG polypeptide according to claim 5 or 6 with a test compound ;
- ii) determining whether said compound selectively binds to said polypeptide, said binding indicating that said compound is a candidate inhibitor.

The invention also relates to a method of identifying a candidate inhibitor of EFG polypeptide, said method comprising:

- a) contacting said polypeptide with a test compound;
- b) determining whether said compound selectively inhibits the activity of said polypeptide, said inhibition indicating that said compound is a candidate inhibitor.

According to a further aspect, the invention relates to a method for locating at least one gene essential for the growth of a haploid fungus, said method comprising the following successive steps:

- generation of diploid strain from haploid fungal strain ;
 - mutagenesis of said diploid strain;
 - haploidisation of the diploid transformant strain, in selection conditions such that the absence of haploid progeny is indicative of mutagenesis occurring in said essential gene;
- said mutagenesis being an *in vivo* transposon mutagenesis.

Preferably, the fungus belongs to the *Aspergillus* genus or the *Penicillium* genus. Preferably, the fungus is *Aspergillus fumigatus*.

Preferably, the transposon is the *impala160* transposon or its derivatives, the selection medium is a benomyl-containing medium, the transposon *impala160* is carried by a plasmid pNIpyr, the diploid strain is chosen between CEA225, CEA 226, CEA 227, and CEA 280:

5 -strain DH5a (pNIpyr): this strain (CNCM I-2815) is derived from strain DH5a of *E. coli* K-12 transformed by a derivative of pBR322 carrying the *impala160* transposon of *Fusarium oxysporum*, in which has been inserted the *pyrG* gene of *Aspergillus nidulans*; transformed in a *niaD*- *pyrG*- of *Aspergillus fumigatus*, this plasmid confers prototrophy to uridin and uracil, and allows to select transposition of
10 *impala160::pyr* by growth in a medium that contains nitrate as the sole nitrogen source.

-CEA 225 (CNCM I-2816), CEA 226 (CNCM I-2817), CEA 227 (CNCM I-2818), and CEA 280 are diploid strains of *Aspergillus fumigatus* derived from the strain CBS144-89 by gene transformation, spontaneous mutagenesis, cross and
15 transformation by plasmid pNIpyr. Genotype: *pyrG1/pyrG1 w1/F2/+ +/r7F1 cnx1/+ niaD1/niaD2 X/X::pNIpyr*.

The invention also provides a method for locating at least one gene essential for the growth of a fungus of the *Penicillium* genus which exhibits a parasexual cycle and the diploids of which are stable.

20 Further, the heterozygous diploid strains are useful tools for direct screening of active molecules against *A. fumigatus*. Accordingly, the invention provides a method of screening of compounds that are active against *A. fumigatus* comprising:

- preparing an *A. fumigatus* strain that is heterozygous for an EFG gene (heterozygous EFGn/efgn) ;
- 25 - preparing an *A. fumigatus* strain that is homozygous for the EFG gene (homozygous EFGn/EFGn) ;
- comparing the effect of a candidate compound on the heterozygous EFGn/efgn and on the homozygous EFGn/EFGn,

the higher inhibiting effect on the heterozygous EFGn/efgn than on the homozygous
30 EFGn/EFGn indicating that the compound is an inhibitor.

This method involves typically the comparison for one EFG gene (for instance for EFG1 gene (n=1), comparison between EFG1/efg1 strain and EFG1/EFG1 strain).

Thus, a population of heterozygous diploid *A. fumigatus* G/g::impala can be screened
 5 in order to identify one or more strains that are more sensitive to a fungicidal compound which action mechanism is unknown : the characterization of the *gene* G will allow to identify the action mechanism of said fungicidal compound.

According to a further aspect, the invention relates to an isolated nucleic acid sequence described above, obtainable by a method of locating described above.

10 According to a further aspect, the invention relates to a composition capable of inhibiting haploid fungal growth, said composition comprising at least onecompound capable of inhibiting the expression of at least one EFG gene the nucleic acid sequence of which is described above.

The composition is typically either pharmaceutical or fungicidal.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEQUENCE LISTING

SEQ	ID
N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168	
20 encoding <i>Aspergillus fumigatus</i> EFG protein. In the whole application, the expression	“SEQ ID
N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168”	means the group
consisting of SEQ ID N°1, SEQ ID N°4, SEQ ID N°7, SEQ ID N°10, SEQ ID	
25 N°13, SEQ ID N°16, SEQ ID N°19, SEQ ID N°22, SEQ ID N°25, SEQ ID N°28, SEQ ID N°31, SEQ ID N°34, SEQ ID N°37, SEQ ID N°40, SEQ ID N°43, SEQ ID	
N°46, SEQ ID N°49, SEQ ID N°52, of SEQ ID N°55, SEQ ID N°58, SEQ ID N°92, SEQ ID N°96, SEQ ID N°100, SEQ ID N°104, SEQ ID N°108, SEQ ID N°112,	
SEQ ID N°116, SEQ ID N°120, SEQ ID N°124, SEQ ID N°128, SEQ ID N°132,	
30 SEQ ID N°136, SEQ ID N°140, SEQ ID N°144, SEQ ID N°148, SEQ ID N°152, SEQ ID N°156, SEQ ID N°160, of SEQ ID N°164, SEQ ID N°168.	

SEQ ID
 N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,
 118,122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170 are the amino acid
 sequences of *Aspergillus fumigatus* EFG polypeptides. In the whole application, the
 5 expression "SEQ ID
 N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,
 118,122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170" means the group
 consisting of SEQ ID N°3, SEQ ID N°6, SEQ ID N°9, SEQ ID N°12, SEQ ID
 N°15, SEQ ID N°18, SEQ ID N°21, SEQ ID N°24, SEQ ID N°27, SEQ ID N°30,
 10 SEQ ID N°33, SEQ ID N°36, SEQ ID N°39, SEQ ID N°42, SEQ ID N°45, SEQ ID
 N°48, SEQ ID N°51, SEQ ID N°54, of SEQ ID N°57, SEQ ID N°60, SEQ ID N°94,
 SEQ ID N°98, SEQ ID N°102, SEQ ID N°106, SEQ ID N°110, SEQ ID N°114,
 SEQ ID N°118, SEQ ID N°122, SEQ ID N°126, SEQ ID N°130, SEQ ID N°134,
 SEQ ID N°138, SEQ ID N°142, SEQ ID N°146, SEQ ID N°150, SEQ ID N°154,
 15 SEQ ID N°158, SEQ ID N°162, of SEQ ID N°166, SEQ ID N°170.

An analogous construction is to be applied when having the expression "SEQ
 ID

N°2,5,8,14,17,20,23,26,29,32,35,38,41,44,47,50,53,56,59,93,97,101,105,109,113,11
 7,121,125,129,133,137,141,145,149,153,157,161,165,169".

20 **Table 1. *A. fumigatus* essential genes^a**

^aFor each identified integration of *impala160::pyrG*, the corresponding TIGR contig
 number is indicated (www.tigr.org) with its length (kb) and the position of the TA
 where transposon integration occur (bp).

Table 1

		<i>A. fumigatus</i> genome sequence version of November 2001										<i>A. fumigatus</i> genome sequence version of February 2003									
Clone Id	Strain Id	Nucl eic acid SEQ ID	ORF SEQ ID	Amin o acid SEQ ID	Contig TIGR n°	Contig length (kb)	impala160::p yrG location	gene SEQ_ ID	Nucl eic acid SEQ ID	ORF SEQ ID	Amin o acid SEQ ID	Contig TIGR n°	Contig length (kb)	Coordinates of gene SEQ_ID on contig	impala160::p yrG location						
10-80	CEA231	1	2	3	131	27.2	15399	103	104	105	106	4940	205712	54154-50350	53934						
10-291	CEA233	4	5	6	164	45.3	40601	111	112	113	114	4865	598154	3495-6359	4705						
7-1-19	CEA254	7	8	9	43	93.1	72592	119	120	121	122	4911	85632	43163-41221	42151						
10-3-7	CEA255	10	11	12	408	71.1	53190	123	124	125	126	4899	1041326	441274- 438167	440657						
2-6-4	CEA256	13	14	15	110	207.8	105657	127	128	129	130	4938	1796676	582107- 579544	581561						
2-1-1	CEA257	16	17	18	493	42.2	14886	131	132	133	134	4951	825238	8362-11737	11010						
2-10-16	CEA258	19	20	21	190	22.1	7131	135	136	137	138	4912	206341	46084-42446	43492						
5-4-21	CEA259	22	23	24	1327	4.7	2928	139	140	141	142	4963	622595	373462- 376145	375531						
2-10-21	CEA260	25	26	27	493	42.8	36145	143	144	145	146	4849	22910	12560-15101	13405						
7-5-9	CEA261	28	29	30	93	53.7	11506	147	148	149	150	4857	593293	164191- 165827	164994						
10-2-18	CEA262	31	32	33	1366	3.6	1870	151	152	153	154	4903	416417	3571-1535	3157						
9-11	CEA230	34	35	36	1754	6.3	603	99	100	101	102	4899	1041326	9642-7242	7285						
4-3-3	CEA263	37	38	39	838	9.8	8261	155	156	157	158	4944	310661	159432- 161250	159931						
11-6-11	CEA264	40	41	42	846	16.7	3278	159	160	161	162	4899	1041326	65039-62439	64261						
8-47	CEA228	43	44	45	960	5.1	223	91	92	93	94	4842	368858	234347- 231296	234245						

Table 1 (continued)

10-304	CEA234	46	47	48	408	71.1	55903	115	116	117	118	4899	1041326	443110- 444619	443430
10-175	CEA232	49	50	51	221	76.1	67069	107	108	109	110	4938	1796676	211008- 213420	211352
11-4-9	CEA265	52	53	54	573	36.5	13244	163	164	165	166	4826	811005	355652- 358190	356111
2-10-18	CEA266	55	56	57	585	39.5	24940	167	168	169	170	4898	422562	329309- 331987	330474
8-62	CEA229	58	59	60	221	76.1	60969	95	96	97	98	4938	1796676	215653- 219466	217453
6-8-13	CEA280				6	212.7	208370	171	172	173	174	4925	1085193	997952- 996381	997591
5-3-11	CEA281. ₁				792	13.7	1353	175	176	177	178	4839	130518	10030-12622	12332
5-3-11	CEA281. ₂				792	13.7	1353	179	180	181	182	4839	130518	12269-14135	12332
10-4-20	CEA282. ₁				443	89.1	67662	183	184	185	186	4929	586561	328110- 325663	328147
10-4-20	CEA282. ₂				443	89.1	67662	187	188	189	190	4929	586561	328075- 330267	328147
11-6-20	CEA283				716	14.3	9480	191				4910	185565	9638-11637	10637
4-3-4	CEA284. ₁				652	29.4	18411	192	193	194	195	4899	1041326	472441- 476776	476988
4-3-4	CEA284. ₂				652	29.4	18411	196	197	198	199	4899	1041326	477626- 479684	476988

Table 1 bis

Clone Id	Protein Id	March 2002 Amino acid SEQ ID	March 2003 Amino acid SEQ ID	Size introns +exons (nt)	Size protein (aa)	Location of impl60::pyr G relative to A in start codon (nt)	S. cerevisiae closest homologue	Essential in S. cerevisiae	Function	Functional category
10-80	CEA231_prot	3	106	2805	934	-280	DBP10/YDL031w	yes	ATP-dependent RNA helicase	RNA processing
10-291	CEA233_prot	6	114	1865	574	733	NAR1/YNL240c	yes	Nuclear architecture related protein	Nuclear architecture
7-1-19	CEA254_prot	9	122	943	200	511	GUK1/YDR454c	yes	Guanylate kinase	Nucleotide metabolism
10-3-7	CEA255_prot	12	126	2108	657	57	SRP101/YDR292c	yes	Signal recognition particle receptor - alpha subunit	Protein transport
2-6-4	CEA256_prot	15	130	1564	460	46	WBP1/YEL002c	yes	Oligosaccharyl transferase beta subunit	Protein modification
2-1-1	CEA257_prot	18	134	2376	715	2148	YGL245w	yes	Glutamate-tRNA synthetase	Protein synthesis
2-10-16	CEA258_prot	21	138	2639	809	2191	CDC27/YBL084c	yes	Cell division control protein	Cell cycle control
5-4-21	CEA259_prot	24	142	1707	568	1569	RSC9/YML127w	yes	Component of the chromatin remodeling complex	Chromatin structure
2-10-21	CEA260_prot	27	146	1542	493	345	SPE2/YOL052c RPL17A/YKL180w	yes	S-adenosylmethionine decarboxylase	Metabolism
7-5-9	CEA261_prot	30	150	637	139	303	RPL17B/YJL177w	no	Ribosomal protein of the large subunit of the ribosome (L17)	Protein synthesis
10-2-18	CEA262_prot	33	154	1037	256	-131	RPL1A/YGL135w RPL1B/YPL220w	no	Ribosomal protein of the large subunit of the ribosome (L1)	Protein synthesis
9-11	CEA230_prot	36	102	1401	399	1316	MSW1/YDR268w	no	Mitochondrial tryptophanyl-tRNA synthetase	Protein synthesis
4-3-3	CEA263_prot	39	158	819	227	-1	GOS1/YHL031c	no	SNARE protein	Protein transport
11-6-11	CEA264_prot	42	162	1601	394	278	RIM11/YMR139w	no	Serine/threonine-protein kinase	Cell cycle control
8-47	CEA228_prot	45	94	2052	683	-398	YFL034w	no	Probable membrane protein; Yf034wp	Unknown

Table 1 bis (continued)

10-304	CEA234 _prot	48	118	461	141	-179	RPL14A/YHL001 w	no	Ribosomal protein of the large subunit of the ribosome (L14)	Protein synthesis
10-175	CEA232 _prot	51	110	1413	428	-105	RPL14B/YKL006w	yes	Ferrochelatase	Heme biosynthesis
11-4-9	CEA265 _prot	54	166	1539	512	-40	HEM15/YOR176w	no	Protoheme IX farnesyltransferase	Heme biosynthesis
2-10-18	CEA266 _prot	57	170	1629	542	195	COX10/YPL172c	no	Topoisomerase	DNA replication
8-62	CEA229 _prot	60	98	2814	937	1300	TRF4/YOL115w	no	unknown function	Unknown
6-8-13	CEA280 _prot	174	174	573	190	138	no hit found	no hit found	weak homology to S. pombeGTPase activator protein and to myocilin	unknown
5-3-11	CEA281. 1_prot	178	178	1974	609	2037	PAC2/YER007w	no	tubulin folding cofactor E	Cytoskeleton
5-3-11	CEA281. 2_prot	182	182	963	291	-290	no hit found	no hit found	unknown function	unknown
10-4-20	CEA282. 1_prot	186	186	1448	464	-537	PBP2/YBR233w	no	hnRNP complex protein/PAB1-binding protein	RNA processing
10-4-20	CEA282. 2_prot	190	190	1143	344	-427	SEC3/YER008c	yes	unknown function	Protein secretion
4-3-4	CEA284. 1_prot	195	195	3336	1059	4049	ENA5/YDR038c	no	P-type ATPase	Ion transport
4-3-4	CEA284. 2_prot	199	199	1059	352	-1137	no hit found	no hit found	secondary metabolite biosynthesis protein	unknown

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1: Strategy for the identification of essential genes in *A. fumigatus*.

A stable diploid strain heterozygous for spore color markers (*w1*, *r7*) is randomly
 5 mutagenized with the transposable element *impala160::pyrG* (*imp::pyr*). During
 haploidization on benomyl containing media, random loss of chromosomes gives rise to
 two sub-populations of colored haploid conidia (*w1* or *r7*): one bearing the transposon-
 inactivated allele (population A) and one bearing wild type allele (population B). The
 ability to form haploid progenies on non selective haploidization medium and the
 10 inability on selective haploidization medium (without uridine and uracile) leads to the
 identification of mutant strains with an insertion in an essential gene.

Figure 2: *In vivo* random transposon mutagenesis in *A. fumigatus*.

(A) Schematic representation of *impala160::pyrG* transposition in a *A. fumigatus* strain
 transformed by pNIpyr. Expression of the nitrate reductase gene (*niaD*) is prevented by
 15 the presence of the transposable element *impala160::pyrG* (*imp::pyr*) into the promoter
 region. Positive selection of transposition events is obtained by selection of nitrate-
 utilizing revertants which appear as a result of the excision of *imp::pyr* and the restoration
 of a functional *niaD* promoter. Selection of *imp::pyr* reintegration events is ensured by
 the presence of *pyrG* in the transposable element when transposition events are induced in
 20 a *A. fumigatus pyrG* strain and in the absence of uridine and uracile. (B) Southern blot
 analysis of parental diploid transformants (lane 1: CEA225; lane 4: CEA226; lane 7:
 CEA227) and diploid revertants (lane 2: Rev 225-1; lane 3: Rev 225-2; lane 5: Rev 226-
 1; lane 6: Rev 226-2; lane 8: Rev 227-1; lane 9: Rev 227-2). Hybridization with a probe
 for *impala160::pyrG* revealed integration of the transposable element into the promoter
 25 of the *niaD* gene in the three parental transformants (arrowheads) and integration at
 apparent random sites in the genome of the diploid revertants.

Figure 3: Parasexual screening. Haploidization of 10 diploid revertants on non-
 selective (A) and selective (B) media.

Random segregation of chromosomes is visualized by the production of differently
 30 colored haploid conidia (see Fig.1: allele *w1* and *r7*). On selective haploidization
 medium, in the case of plasmid integration in an essential gene, a residual growth

phenotype is observed (arrowheads). For these revertants, haploid spores obtained on non selective haploidization medium were tested for the absence of the transposable element in order to confirm the essential phenotype.

5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is based on the discovery of novel molecules, referred to herein as EFG protein and nucleic acid molecules, encoding proteins Essential For Growth expressed in *Aspergillus fumigatus*.

10 An artificial *A. fumigatus* diploid strain with one copy of the *impala160* transposon from *Fusarium oxysporum* integrated into its genome was used to generate a library of diploid strains with random transposon integration. Among *ca.* 2,300 heterozygous diploid strains screened by parasexual genetics, 1.2% have a copy of the transposable element integrated into a gene essential for fungal growth. Homologues of genes essential for *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* growth have been identified, as well as
15 genes that do not share homologues in other fungal species.

The term "EFG genes" refers to genes that are necessary for efficient fungal growth. An efficient growth refers to the normal growth of this fungus in absence of inhibitor of at least one of these genes. Inhibitors may be used to inhibit normal expression of at least one of the EFG genes identified herein.

20 Isolated EFG proteins of the present invention, have an amino acid sequences sufficiently homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, or are encoded by a nucleotide sequence sufficiently homologous to one of SEQ ID
25 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168. As used herein, the term "sufficiently homologous" refers to a first amino acid or nucleotide sequence which contains a sufficient or minimum number of identical or equivalent (*e.g.*, an amino acid residue which has a similar side chain) amino acid residues or nucleotides to a second
30 amino acid or nucleotide sequence such that the first and second amino acid or nucleotide sequences share common structural domains or motifs and/or a common functional

activity. For example, amino acid or nucleotide sequences which share common structural domains have at least about 30-40% identity, preferably 40-50% identity, more preferably 50-60%, and even more preferably 60-70%, 70-80%, 80, 90%, 95%, 97%, 98%, 99% or 99.8% identity across the amino acid sequences of the domains are defined herein as sufficiently homologous. Furthermore, amino acid or nucleotide sequences which share at least 30%, preferably 40%, more preferably 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 95%, 97%, 98%, 99% or 99.8% identity and share a common functional activity are defined herein as sufficiently homologous.

Homologues are thus defined as those genes or gene products that show a significant level of identity or similarity at the nucleotide or amino acid level, respectively, as indicated above.

Orthologous genes are defined herein as those genes or gene products from two different species which, upon individual comparison to the gene set of the other species, appear reciprocally as the closest homologues.

As used interchangeably herein, a "EFG activity", "biological activity of EFG" or "functional activity of EFG", refers to an activity exerted by a EFG protein, polypeptide or nucleic acid molecule as determined *in vivo*, or *in vitro*, according to appropriate techniques.

The level of inhibition of EFG activity may depend on the number of the EFG genes that are inhibited and on the EFG genes inhibited. The inhibition of at least one EFG gene results in an inhibition of at least 5, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, 90, 95% of the efficient growth. Preferably, the inhibition is of 100%, meaning the total suppression of growth and of the toxic effect of the fungus.

In one embodiment, a EFG activity is a direct activity, such as an association with a EFG-target molecule or most preferably EFG activity. As used herein, a "target molecule" is a molecule with which a EFG protein binds or interacts in nature, such that EFG-mediated function is achieved. Alternatively, a EFG activity is an indirect activity, such as an activity mediated by interaction of the EFG protein with a EFG target molecule such that the target molecule modulates a downstream cellular activity (e.g., interaction of an EFG molecule with a EFG target molecule can modulate the activity of that target molecule on an intracellular signaling pathway).

I. EFG Nucleic Acids

The inventors have identified and completely characterized 21 EFG cDNA indicated in Table 1 and Table 1bis. For instance EFG2 refers to a 1735 nucleotide (nt) sequence in length (SEQ ID N°4) which comprises the nucleic acid of SEQ ID N°5 of 1592 nt in length, which encodes the protein of SEQ ID N°6, which is 530 amino acid residues in length.

One aspect of the invention pertains to purified or isolated nucleic acid molecules that encode EFG proteins or biologically active portions thereof, as well as nucleic acid fragments thereof. Fragments may be used for example as hybridization probes to identify EFG-encoding nucleic acids (e.g., EFG mRNA) and fragments for use as probes (e.g. for detection of EFG nucleic acid molecules) or primers (e.g. for sequencing, genotyping, amplification or mutation of EFG nucleic acid molecules). As used herein, the term "nucleic acids" and "nucleic acid molecule" is intended to include DNA molecules (e.g., cDNA or genomic DNA) and RNA molecules (e.g., mRNA) and analogs of the DNA or RNA generated using nucleotide analogs. The nucleic acid molecule can be single-stranded or double-stranded, but preferably is double-stranded DNA. Throughout the present specification, the expression "nucleotide sequence" may be employed to designate indifferently a polynucleotide or a nucleic acid. More precisely, the expression "nucleotide sequence" encompasses the nucleic material itself and is thus not restricted to the sequence information (i.e., the succession of letters chosen among the four base letters) that biochemically characterizes a specific DNA or RNA molecule. Also, used interchangeably herein are terms "nucleic acids", "oligonucleotides", and "polynucleotides".

An "isolated" nucleic acid molecule is one which is separated from other nucleic acid molecules which are present in the natural source of the nucleic acid. Preferably, an "isolated" nucleic acid is free of sequences which naturally flank the nucleic acid (i.e., sequences located at the 5' and 3' ends of the nucleic acid) in the genomic DNA of the organism from which the nucleic acid is derived. Moreover, an "isolated" nucleic acid molecule, such as a cDNA molecule, can be substantially free of other cellular material, or culture medium when produced by recombinant techniques, or substantially free of

chemical precursors or other chemicals when chemically synthesized.

A nucleic acid molecule of the present invention, e.g., a nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
5 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, or a portion thereof, can be isolated using standard molecular biology techniques and the sequence information provided herein. Using all or portion of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
10 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, as a hybridization probe, EFG nucleic acid molecules can be isolated using standard hybridization and cloning techniques (e.g., as described in Sambrook, J., Fritsh, E. F., and Maniatis, T. Molecular Cloning. A Laboratory Manual. 2nd, ed., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y., 1989).

Moreover, a nucleic acid molecule encompassing all or a portion of a sequence of
15 SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, can be isolated by the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) using synthetic oligonucleotide primers designed based upon a sequence of SEQ ID
20 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168.

A nucleic acid of the invention can be amplified using cDNA, mRNA or alternatively, genomic DNA, as a template and appropriate oligonucleotide primers according to standard PCR amplification techniques. The nucleic acid so amplified can be
25 cloned into an appropriate vector and characterized by DNA sequence analysis. Furthermore, oligonucleotides corresponding to EFG nucleotide sequences can be prepared by standard synthetic techniques, e.g., using an automated DNA synthesizer.

In a preferred embodiment, an isolated nucleic acid molecule of the invention comprises, consists essentially of, or consists of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID
30 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, or fragments thereof. The

sequences of SEQ ID
 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, correspond to *A. fumigatus* EFG
 cDNA.

5 Also encompassed by the EFG nucleic acids of the invention are nucleic acid
 molecules which are complementary to EFG nucleic acids described herein. Preferably, a
 complementary nucleic acid is sufficiently complementary to a nucleotide sequence of
 SEQ ID
 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
 10 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, such that it can hybridize to a
 nucleotide sequence of SEQ
 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168.

Another object of the invention is a purified, isolated, or recombinant nucleic acid
 15 encoding a EFG polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID
 N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118,
 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, or fragments thereof. Preferred
 polynucleotides of the invention also include purified, isolated, or recombinant EFG
 cDNAs consisting of, consisting essentially of, or comprising a sequence of SEQ ID
 20 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168. Particularly preferred nucleic
 acids of the invention include isolated, purified, or recombinant polynucleotides
 comprising a contiguous span of at least 12, 15, 18, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90,
 100, 150, 200, 500, 1000 or 2000 nucleotides (upper lengths of the fragments to be
 25 adapted to the length of the nucleotide sequence) of a sequence of SEQ ID
 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, or the complements thereof.

Moreover, the nucleic acid molecule of the invention can comprise only a portion
 of a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID
 30 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116,
 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, for example a fragment which

can be used as a probe or primer or a fragment encoding a biologically active portion of a EFG protein. The nucleotide sequence determined from the cloning of the EFG genes allows for the generation of probes and primers designed for use in identifying and/or cloning other EFG family members, as well as EFG homologues from other species. The probe/primer typically comprises substantially purified oligonucleotide. The oligonucleotide typically comprises a region of nucleotide sequence that hybridizes under stringent conditions to at least about 12, preferably about 25, more preferably about 40, 50 or 75 consecutive nucleotides of a sequence of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, or a sequence complementary thereto.

A nucleic acid fragment encoding a "biologically active portion of a EFG protein" can be prepared by isolating a portion of a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, which encodes a polypeptide having a EFG biological activity (the biological activities of the EFG proteins described herein), expressing the encoded portion of the EFG protein (e.g., by recombinant expression in vitro) and assessing the activity of the encoded portion of the EFG protein.

The invention further encompasses nucleic acid molecules that differ from a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, due to degeneracy of the genetic code and thus encode the same EFG proteins as those encoded by a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID

N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168. In another embodiment, an isolated nucleic acid molecule of the invention comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding a protein having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170.

In addition to the EFG nucleotide sequences of SEQ ID

N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that DNA sequence polymorphisms that lead to changes in the amino acid sequences of the EFG proteins may exist within a population (e.g., the fungal population). Such genetic polymorphism in the EFG genes may exist among individuals within a population due to natural allelic variation. As used herein, the terms "gene" and "recombinant gene" refer to nucleic acid molecules comprising an open reading frame encoding an EFG protein, preferably a fungal EFG protein. Such natural allelic variations can typically result in 1-5% variance in the nucleotide sequence of a EFG gene. Any and all such nucleotide variations and resulting amino acid polymorphisms in EFG genes that are the result of natural allelic variation and, most preferably, that do not alter the functional activity of a EFG protein are intended to be within the scope of the invention.

Nucleic acid molecules corresponding to natural allelic variants and homologues of the EFG cDNAs of the invention can be isolated based on their homology to the EFG nucleic acids disclosed herein using the cDNAs disclosed herein, or a portion thereof, as a hybridization probe according to standard hybridization techniques under stringent hybridization conditions.

As used herein, the term "hybridizes under stringent conditions" is intended to describe conditions for hybridization and washing under which nucleotide sequences at least 60% homologous to each other typically remain hybridized to each other. Preferably, the conditions are such that sequences at least about 70%, more preferably at least about 80%, even more preferably at least about 85%, 90%, 95% or 98% homologous to each other typically remain hybridized to each other. Stringent conditions are known to those skilled in the art and can be found in Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, John Wiley & Sons, N.Y. (1989), 6.3.1-6.3.6. A preferred, non-limiting example of stringent hybridization conditions are hybridization in 6 * sodium chloride/sodium citrate (SSC) at about 45°C, followed by one or more washes in 0.2 *SSC, 0.1% SDS at 50-65°C. Preferably, an isolated nucleic acid molecule of the invention that hybridizes under stringent conditions to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 corresponds to a naturally-occurring nucleic acid molecule. As used herein, a "naturally-occurring" nucleic acid molecule refers to a RNA or DNA molecule having a nucleotide sequence that occurs in nature

(e.g., encodes a natural protein).

In addition to naturally-occurring allelic variants of the EFG sequences that may exist in the population, the skilled artisan will further appreciate that changes can be introduced by mutation into a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID
 5 N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, thereby leading to changes in the amino acid sequence of the encoded EFG proteins, without altering the functional ability of the EFG proteins. For example, nucleotide substitutions leading to amino acid substitutions at "non-essential" amino acid residues can be made in a sequence of
 10 N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170. A "non-essential" amino acid residue is a residue that can be altered from the wild-type sequence of EFG (e.g., the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1) without altering the biological activity, whereas an "essential" amino acid residue is required for biological activity. For example, amino acid residues
 15 that are conserved among the EFG proteins of the present invention, are predicted to be less unamenable to alteration. Furthermore, additional conserved amino acid residues may be amino acids that are conserved between the EFG proteins of the present invention and other members of the *Aspergillus* family and/or of other fungi.

Thus, the invention further encompasses nucleic acid molecules that are
 20 homologous to the nucleic acids of *A. fumigatus* described above and that are isolated from target phytopathogenic fungi, namely *Botrytis cinerea*, *Mycosphaerella graminicola*, *Stagnospora nodorum*, *Blumeria graminis*, *Colleotrichum lindemuthianum*, *Puccinia graminis*, *Leptosphaeria maculans*, *Fusarium oxysporum*, *Fusarium graminearum*, *Venturia inaequalis*, most preferably fungi of the genus *Magnaporthe*,
 25 even most preferably *Magnaporthe grisea*.

Accordingly, another aspect of the invention pertains to nucleic acid molecules encoding EFG proteins and biologically active fragments thereof that contain changes in amino acid residues that are not essential for activity. Such EFG proteins differ in amino acid
 sequence of SEQ ID
 30 N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, yet retain biological activity. In

one embodiment, the isolated nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding a protein, wherein the protein comprises an amino acid sequence at least about 60% homologous to an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118,
 5 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170. Preferably, the protein encoded by the nucleic acid molecule is at least about 65-70% homologous to a sequence of SEQ ID

N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, more preferably sharing at least
 10 about 75-80% identity with SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, even more preferably sharing at least about 85%, 90%, 92%, 95%, 97%, 98%, 99% or 99.8% identity with a sequence of SEQ ID

15 N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170.

An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a EFG protein homologous to a protein of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118,
 20 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, can be created by introducing one or more nucleotide substitutions, additions or deletions into a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID

N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, such that one or more amino
 25 acid substitutions, additions or deletions are introduced into the encoded protein. Mutations can be introduced into a sequence of N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, by standard techniques, such as site-directed mutagenesis and PCR-mediated mutagenesis. Preferably, conservative
 30 amino acid substitutions are made at one or more predicted non-essential amino acid residues. A "conservative amino acid substitution" is one in which the amino acid residue

is replaced with an amino acid residue having a similar side chain. Families of amino acid residues having similar side chains have been defined in the art. These families include amino acids with basic side chains (e.g., lysine, arginine, histidine), acidic side chains (e.g., aspartic acid, glutamic acid), uncharged polar side chains (e.g., glycine, asparagine, glutamine, serine, threonine, tyrosine, cysteine), nonpolar side chains (e.g., alanine, valine, leucine, isoleucine, proline, phenylalanine, methionine, tryptophan), beta-branched side chains (e.g., threonine, valine, isoleucine) and aromatic side chains (e.g., tyrosine, phenylalanine, tryptophan, histidine). Thus, a predicted nonessential amino acid residue in a EFG protein is preferably replaced with another amino acid residue from the same side chain family. Alternatively, in another embodiment, mutations can be introduced randomly along all or part of a EFG coding sequence, such as by saturation mutagenesis. Following mutagenesis the encoded protein can be expressed recombinantly and the activity of the protein can be determined.

The biological EFG activity of the protein fragments and mutants described above can be assayed according to the tests known from the one skilled in the art.

Primers and probes of the invention can be prepared by any suitable method, including, for example, cloning and restriction of appropriate sequences and direct chemical synthesis by a method such as the phosphodiester method of Narang SA, Hsiung HM, Brousseau R, *Methods Enzymol* 1979;68:90-98, the phosphodiester method of Brown EL, Belagaje R, Ryan MJ, Khorana HG, *Methods Enzymol* 1979;68:109-151, the diethylphosphoramidite method of Beaucage et al., *Tetrahedron Lett* 1981, 22: 1859-1862 and the solid support method described in EP 0 707 592.

Any of the polynucleotides of the present invention can be labeled, if desired, by incorporating any label known in the art to be detectable by spectroscopic, photochemical, biochemical, immunochemical, or chemical means. For example, useful labels include radioactive substances (including, ^{32}P , ^{35}S , ^3H , ^{125}I), fluorescent dyes (including, 5-bromodesoxyuridin, fluorescein, acetylaminofluorene, digoxigenin) or biotin. Preferably, polynucleotides are labeled at their 3' and 5' ends. A label can also be used to capture the primer, so as to facilitate the immobilization of either the primer or a primer extension product, such as amplified DNA, on a solid support. A capture label is attached to the primers or probes and can be a specific binding member which forms a

binding pair with the solid's phase reagent's specific binding member (e.g. biotin and streptavidin). Therefore depending upon the type of label carried by a polynucleotide or a probe, it may be employed to capture or to detect the target DNA. Further, it will be understood that the polynucleotides, primers or probes provided herein, may, themselves, serve as the capture label.

The probes of the present invention are useful for a number of purposes. They can be notably used in Southern hybridization to genomic DNA. The probes can also be used to detect PCR amplification products. They may also be used to detect mismatches in the EFG gene or mRNA using other techniques.

Any of the polynucleotides, primers and probes of the present invention can be conveniently immobilized on a solid support. Solid supports are known to those skilled in the art. A solid support, as used herein, refers to any material which is insoluble, or can be made insoluble by a subsequent reaction. The solid support can be chosen for its intrinsic ability to attract and immobilize the capture reagent. Alternatively, the solid phase can retain an additional receptor which has the ability to attract and immobilize the capture reagent. The additional receptor can include a charged substance that is oppositely charged with respect to the capture reagent itself or to a charged substance conjugated to the capture reagent. As yet another alternative, the receptor molecule can be any specific binding member which is immobilized upon (attached to) the solid support and which has the ability to immobilize the capture reagent through a specific binding reaction. The receptor molecule enables the indirect binding of the capture reagent to a solid support material before the performance of the assay or during the performance of the assay. The solid phase thus can be a plastic, derivatized plastic, magnetic or non-magnetic metal, glass or silicon surface of a test tube, microtiter well, sheet, bead, microparticle, chip, sheep (or other suitable animal's) red blood cells, duracytes and other configurations known to those of ordinary skill in the art. The polynucleotides of the invention can be attached to or immobilized on a solid support individually or in groups of at least 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 20, or 25 distinct polynucleotides of the invention to a single solid support. In addition, polynucleotides other than those of the invention may be attached to the same solid support as one or more polynucleotides of the invention.

Consequently, the invention also comprises a method for detecting the presence of a

nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, a fragment or a variant thereof and a complementary sequence thereto in a sample, said method comprising the following steps of:

a) bringing into contact a nucleic acid probe or a plurality of nucleic acid probes which can hybridize with a nucleotide sequence included in a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID

N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, a fragment or a variant thereof and a complementary sequence thereto and the sample to be assayed; and

b) detecting the hybrid complex formed between the probe and a nucleic acid in the sample.

Any polynucleotide provided herein may be attached in overlapping areas or at random locations on a solid support. Alternatively the polynucleotides of the invention may be attached in an ordered array wherein each polynucleotide is attached to a distinct region of the solid support which does not overlap with the attachment site of any other polynucleotide. Preferably, such an ordered array of polynucleotides is designed to be "addressable" where the distinct locations are recorded and can be accessed as part of an assay procedure. Addressable polynucleotide arrays typically comprise a plurality of different oligonucleotide probes that are coupled to a surface of a substrate in different known locations. The knowledge of the precise location of each polynucleotides location makes these "addressable" arrays particularly useful in hybridization assays. Any addressable array technology known in the art can be employed with the polynucleotides of the invention. One particular embodiment of these polynucleotide arrays is known as the Genechips, and has been generally described in US Patent 5,143,854; PCT publications WO 90/15070 and 92/10092.

II. EFG Polypeptides and Anti-EFG Antibodies

One aspect of the invention pertains to isolated EFG proteins, and biologically active portions thereof, as well as polypeptide fragments suitable for use as immunogens

to raise fungus, preferably *Aspergillus*, most preferably *A. fumigatus*, anti-EFG antibodies. In one embodiment, native EFG proteins can be isolated from cells or tissue sources by an appropriate purification scheme using standard protein purification techniques. In another embodiment, EFG proteins are produced by recombinant DNA techniques. Alternative to recombinant expression, a EFG protein or polypeptide can be synthesized chemically using standard peptide synthesis techniques.

An "isolated" or "purified" protein or biologically active portion thereof is substantially free of cellular material or other contaminating proteins from the cell or tissue source from which the EFG protein is derived, or substantially free from chemical precursors or other chemicals when chemically synthesized. The language "substantially free of cellular material" includes preparations of EFG protein in which the protein is separated from cellular components of the cells from which it is isolated or recombinantly produced. In one embodiment, the language "substantially free of cellular material" includes preparations of EFG protein having less than about 30% (by dry weight) of non-EFG protein (also referred to herein as a "contaminating protein"), more preferably less than about 20% of non-EFG protein, still more preferably less than about 10% of non-EFG protein, and most preferably less than about 5% non-EFG protein. When the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof is recombinantly produced, it is also preferably substantially free of culture medium, i.e., culture medium represents less than about 20%, more preferably less than about 10%, and most preferably less than about 5% of the volume of the protein preparation.

The term "polypeptide" refers to a polymer of amino acids without regard to the length of the polymer; thus, peptides, oligopeptides, and proteins are included within the definition of polypeptide. This term also does not specify or exclude post-expression modifications of polypeptides, for example, polypeptides which include the covalent attachment of glycosyl groups, acetyl groups, phosphate groups, lipid groups and the like are expressly encompassed by the term polypeptide. Also included within the definition are polypeptides which contain one or more analogs of an amino acid (including, for example, non-naturally occurring amino acids, amino acids which only occur naturally in an unrelated biological system, modified amino acids from mammalian systems etc.), polypeptides with substituted linkages, as well as other modifications known in the art,

both naturally occurring and non-naturally occurring.

The term "recombinant polypeptide" is used herein to refer to polypeptides that have been artificially designed and which comprise at least two polypeptide sequences that are not found as contiguous polypeptide sequences in their initial natural environment, or to refer to polypeptides which have been expressed from a recombinant polynucleotide.

Biologically active portions of a EFG protein include peptides comprising amino acid sequences sufficiently homologous to or derived from an amino acid sequence of the EFG protein having a sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, which include less amino acids than the full length EFG proteins, and exhibit at least one activity of a EFG protein. Typically, biologically active portions comprise a domain or motif with at least one activity of the EFG protein. A biologically active portion of a EFG protein can be a polypeptide which is, for example at least 15, 25, 50, 100, 150, 200, 300, 400, 500, or more amino acids in length. The upper length just mentioned is of course to be adapted according to the size of the protein.

In a preferred embodiment, the EFG protein comprises, consists essentially of, or consists of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170. The invention also concerns the polypeptide encoded by a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168, a complementary sequence thereof or a fragment thereto. The present invention embodies isolated, purified, and recombinant polypeptides comprising a contiguous span of at least 6 amino acids, preferably at least 8 to 10 amino acids, more preferably at least 12, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600 or 650 amino acids in length (upper length defined as mentioned above).

In other embodiments, the EFG protein is substantially homologous to SEQ ID

N^o3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, and retains the functional activity (at least 50, 60, 80, 90, 99%) of a protein of SEQ ID N^o3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170 yet differs in amino acid sequence due to natural allelic variation or mutagenesis, as described in detail in subsection I above. Accordingly, in another embodiment, the EFG protein is a protein which comprises an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID N^o3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, and retains the functional activity of an EFG proteins of SEQ ID N^o3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, respectively.

Preferably, the protein is at least about 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 85%, 90%, 92%, 95%, 97%, 98%, 99% or 99.8% homologous to a sequence of SEQ ID N^o3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170.

To determine the percent homology of two amino acid sequences or of two nucleic acids, the sequences are aligned for optimal comparison purposes (e.g., gaps can be introduced in the sequence of a first amino acid or nucleic acid sequence for optimal alignment with a second amino or nucleic acid sequence and non-homologous sequences can be disregarded for comparison purposes). In a preferred embodiment, the length of a reference sequence aligned for comparison purposes is at least 30%, preferably at least 40%, more preferably at least 50%, even more preferably at least 60%, and even more preferably at least 70%, 80%, 90% or 95% of the length of the reference sequence. The amino acid residues or nucleotides at corresponding amino acid positions or nucleotide positions are then compared. When a position in the first sequence is occupied by the same amino acid residue or nucleotide as the corresponding position in the second sequence, then the molecules are homologous at that position (i.e., as used herein amino acid or nucleic acid "identity" is equivalent to amino acid or nucleic acid "homology").

The comparison of sequences and determination of percent homology between two sequences can be accomplished using a mathematical algorithm, preferably the alignment method of Needleman and Wush, *J. Mol. Biol.*, 1970, n°48, p443, using the GAP GCC package (Devereux et al., *Nucl. Acid. Res.*, 1984, vol12, p387). An other non-limiting
5 example of a mathematical algorithm utilized for the comparison of sequences is the algorithm of Karlin and Altschul (1990) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 87:2264-68, modified as in Karlin and Altschul (1993) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 90:5873-77. Such an algorithm is incorporated into the NBLAST and XBLAST programs (version 2.0) of Altschul, et al. (1990) *J. Mol. Biol.* 215:403-10. BLAST nucleotide searches can be
10 performed with the NBLAST program, score=100, wordlength=12 to obtain nucleotide sequences homologous to EFG nucleic acid molecules of the invention. BLAST protein searches can be performed with the XBLAST program, score=50, wordlength=3 to obtain amino acid sequences homologous to EFG protein molecules of the invention. To obtain gapped alignments for comparison purposes, Gapped BLAST can be utilized as described
15 in Altschul et al., (1997) *Nucleic Acids Research* 25(17):3389-3402. When utilizing BLAST and Gapped BLAST programs, the default parameters of the respective programs (e.g., XBLAST and NBLAST) can be used. See <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>. Another preferred, non-limiting example of a mathematical algorithm utilized for the comparison of sequences is the algorithm of Myers and Miller, CABIOS (1989). Such an algorithm is
20 incorporated into the ALIGN program (version 2.0) which is part of the GCG sequence alignment software package. When utilizing the ALIGN program for comparing amino acid sequences, a PAM120 weight residue table, a gap length penalty of 12, and a gap penalty of 4 can be used.

The invention also provides EFG chimeric or fusion proteins. As used herein, a
25 EFG "chimeric protein" or "fusion protein" comprises a EFG polypeptide operatively linked, preferably fused in frame, to a non-EFG polypeptide. In a preferred embodiment, a EFG fusion protein comprises at least one biologically active portion of a EFG protein. In another preferred embodiment, a EFG fusion protein comprises at least two biologically active portions of a EFG protein. For example, in one embodiment, the fusion protein is a
30 GST-EFG fusion protein in which the EFG sequences are fused to the C-terminus of the GST sequences. Such fusion proteins can facilitate the purification of recombinant EFG.

In another embodiment, the fusion protein is a EFG protein containing a heterologous signal sequence at its N-terminus, such as for example to allow for a desired cellular localization in a certain host cell.

The EFG fusion proteins of the invention can be incorporated into pharmaceutical compositions and administered to a subject in vivo. Moreover, the EFG-fusion proteins of the invention can be used as immunogens to produce anti-EFG antibodies in a subject, to purify EFG ligands and in screening assays to identify molecules which inhibit the interaction of EFG with a EFG target molecule.

The present invention also pertains to variants of the EFG proteins which function as either EFG mimetics or as EFG inhibitors. Variants of the EFG proteins can be generated by mutagenesis, e.g., discrete point mutation or truncation of a EFG protein. An agonist of the EFG proteins can retain substantially the same, or a subset, of the biological activities of the naturally occurring form of a EFG protein. An antagonist of a EFG protein can inhibit one or more of the activities of the naturally occurring form of the EFG protein by, for example, competitively inhibiting the EFG activity of a EFG protein. Thus, specific biological effects can be elicited by treatment with a variant of limited function.

In a preferred embodiment, variants of a EFG protein which function as EFG antagonists can be identified by screening combinatorial libraries of mutants, e.g., truncation mutants, of a EFG protein for EFG protein antagonist activity. In one embodiment, a variegated library of EFG variants is generated by combinatorial mutagenesis at the nucleic acid level and is encoded by a variegated gene library. A variegated library of EFG variants can be produced by, for example, enzymatically ligating a mixture of synthetic oligonucleotides into gene sequences such that a degenerate set of potential EFG sequences is expressible as individual polypeptides, or alternatively, as a set of larger fusion proteins (e.g., for phage display) containing the set of EFG sequences therein. There are a variety of methods which can be used to produce libraries of potential EFG variants from a degenerate oligonucleotide sequence. Chemical synthesis of a degenerate gene sequence can be performed in an automatic DNA synthesizer, and the synthetic gene then ligated into an appropriate expression vector. Use of a degenerate set of genes allows for the provision, in one mixture, of all of the

sequences encoding the desired set of potential EFG sequences.

In addition, libraries of fragments of a EFG protein coding sequence can be used to generate a variegated population of EFG fragments for screening and subsequent selection of variants of a EFG protein. In one embodiment, a library of coding sequence
5 fragments can be generated by treating a double stranded PCR fragment of a EFG coding sequence with a nuclease under conditions wherein nicking occurs only about once per molecule, denaturing the double stranded DNA, renaturing the DNA to form double stranded DNA which can include sense/antisense pairs from different nicked products, removing single stranded portions from reformed duplexes by treatment with S1 nuclease,
10 and ligating the resulting fragment library into an expression vector. By this method, an expression library can be derived which encodes N-terminal, C-terminal and internal fragments of various sizes of the EFG protein.

Several techniques are known in the art for screening gene products of combinatorial libraries made by point mutations or truncation, and for screening cDNA
15 libraries for gene products having a selected property. Such techniques are adaptable for rapid screening of the gene libraries generated by the combinatorial mutagenesis of EFG proteins. The most widely used techniques, which are amenable to high through-put analysis, for screening large gene libraries typically include cloning the gene library into replicable expression vectors, transforming appropriate cells with the resulting library of
20 vectors, and expressing the combinatorial genes under conditions in which detection of a desired activity facilitates isolation of the vector encoding the gene whose product was detected.

In one embodiment, cell based assays can be exploited to analyze a variegated EFG library.

25 Modified EFG proteins can be used for such purposes as enhancing therapeutic or prophylactic efficacy, or stability (e.g., ex vivo shelf life and resistance to proteolytic degradation in vivo). Such modified peptides, when designed to retain at least one activity of the naturally occurring form of the protein, are considered functional equivalents of the EFG protein described in more detail herein. Such modified peptide can be produced, for
30 instance, by amino acid substitution, deletion, or addition.

Whether a change in the amino acid sequence of a peptide results in a functional EFG homolog (e.g. functional in the sense that it acts to mimic or antagonize the wild-type form) can be readily determined by assessing the ability of the variant peptide to produce a response in cells in a fashion similar to the wild-type EFG protein or competitively inhibit such a response. Peptides in which more than one replacement has taken place can readily be tested in the same manner.

A wide range of techniques are known in the art for screening gene products of combinatorial libraries made by point mutations, as well as for screening cDNA libraries for gene products having a certain property. Such techniques will be generally adaptable for rapid screening of the gene libraries generated by the combinatorial mutagenesis of EFG proteins. The most widely used techniques for screening large gene libraries typically comprises cloning the gene library into replicable expression vectors, transforming appropriate cells with the resulting library of vectors, and expressing the combinatorial genes under conditions in which detection of a desired activity facilitates relatively easy isolation of the vector encoding the gene whose product was detected.

The invention also provides for identification and reduction to functional minimal size of the EFG domains of the subject EFG proteins to generate mimetics, e.g. peptide or non-peptide agents, which are able to disrupt binding of a polypeptide of the present invention with a EFG target protein. Thus, such mutagenic techniques as described above are also useful to map the determinants of EFG proteins which participate in protein-protein interactions involved in, for example, binding to a EFG target protein. To illustrate, the critical residues of a EFG protein which are involved in molecular recognition of the EFG target can be determined and used to generate EFG target-13P-derived peptidomimetics that competitively inhibit binding of the EFG to the EFG target. By employing, for example, scanning mutagenesis to map tile amino acid residues of a particular EFG protein involved in binding a EFG target, peptidomimetic compounds can be generated which mimic those residues in binding to a EFG target, and which, by inhibiting binding of the EFG protein to the EFG target protein, can interfere with the function of a EFG target in transcriptional regulation of one or more genes. For instance, non hydrolyzable peptide analogs of such residues can be generated using retro-inverse peptides (e.g., see U.S. Patents 5,116,947 and 5,219,089; and Pallai et al. (1983) Int J

Pept Protein Res 21:84-92), benzodiazepine (e.g., see Freidinger et al. in Peptides: Chemistry and Biology, G.R. Marshall ed., ESCOM Publisher: Leiden, Netherlands, 1988), azepine (e.g., see Huffman et al. in Peptides.- Chemistry and Biology, G.R. Marshall ed., ESCOM Publisher: Leiden, Netherlands, 1988).

5 An isolated EFG protein, or a portion or fragment thereof, can be used as an immunogen to generate antibodies that bind EFG using standard techniques for polyclonal and monoclonal antibody preparation. Even if they are internal fungus protein, EFG proteins may induce an immunitary response in contact with the host organism.

A full-length EFG protein can be used or, alternatively, the invention provides antigenic peptide fragments of EFG for use as immunogens. The antigenic peptide of EFG
10 comprises at least 8 amino acid residues of an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, and encompasses an epitope of EFG such that an antibody raised against the peptide forms a specific immune complex
15 with EFG. Preferably, the antigenic peptide comprises at least 10 amino acid residues, more preferably at least 15 amino acid residues, even more preferably at least 20 amino acid residues, and most preferably at least 30 amino acid residues.

Preferred epitopes encompassed by the antigenic peptide are regions of EFG that are located on the surface of the protein, e.g., hydrophilic regions.

20 A EFG immunogen typically is used to prepare antibodies by immunizing a suitable subject, (e.g., rabbit, goat, mouse or other mammal) with the immunogen. An appropriate immunogenic preparation can contain, for example, recombinantly expressed EFG protein or a chemically synthesized EFG polypeptide. The preparation can further include an adjuvant, such as Freund's complete or incomplete adjuvant, or similar
25 immunostimulatory agent. Immunization of a suitable subject with an immunogenic EFG preparation induces a polyclonal anti-EFG antibody response.

Accordingly, another aspect of the invention pertains to anti-EFG antibodies. The term "antibody" as used herein refers to immunoglobulin molecules and immunologically active portions of immunoglobulin molecules, i.e., molecules that contain an antigen
30 binding site which specifically binds (immunoreacts with) an antigen, such as EFG polypeptides. Examples of immunologically active portions of immunoglobulin

molecules include F(ab) and F(ab').sub.2 fragments which can be generated by treating the antibody with an enzyme such as pepsin. The invention provides polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies that bind EFG polypeptides. The term "monoclonal antibody" or "monoclonal antibody composition", as used herein, refers to a population of antibody
5 molecules that contain only one species of an antigen binding site capable of immunoreacting with a particular epitope of EFG polypeptides. A monoclonal antibody composition thus typically displays a single binding affinity for a particular EFG protein with which it immunoreacts.

The invention concerns antibody compositions, either polyclonal or monoclonal,
10 capable of selectively binding, or selectively bind to an epitope-containing a polypeptide comprising a contiguous span of at least 6 amino acids, preferably at least 8 to 10 amino acids, more preferably at least 12, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, or 100 amino acids of a sequence of

	SEQ	ID
	N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118,	
15	122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170	(upper length according to the total length of each EFG protein).

The invention also concerns a purified or isolated antibody capable of specifically binding to a mutated EFG protein or to a fragment or variant thereof comprising an epitope of the mutated EFG protein

Polyclonal anti-EFG antibodies can be prepared as described above by
20 immunizing a suitable subject with a EFG immunogen. The anti-EFG antibody titer in the immunized subject can be monitored over time by standard techniques, such as with an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) using immobilized EFG proteins. If desired, the antibody molecules directed against EFG proteins can be isolated from the mammal (e.g., from the blood) and further purified by well known techniques, such as
25 protein A chromatography to obtain the IgG fraction. At an appropriate time after immunization, e.g., when the anti-EFG antibody titers are highest, antibody-producing cells can be obtained from the subject and used to prepare monoclonal antibodies by standard techniques.

Any of the many well known protocols used for fusing lymphocytes and
30 immortalized cell lines can be applied for the purpose of generating an anti-EFG monoclonal antibody (see, e.g., G. Galfre et al. (1977) Nature 266:55052; Gefter et al.

Somatic Cell Genet., cited supra; Lerner, Yale J Biol. Med, cited supra; Kenneth, Monoclonal Antibodies, cited supra). Moreover, the ordinarily skilled worker will appreciate that there are many variations of such methods which also would be useful. Typically, the immortal cell line (e.g., a myeloma cell line) is derived from the same mammalian species as the lymphocytes. For example, murine hybridomas can be made by fusing lymphocytes from a mouse immunized with an immunogenic preparation of the present invention with an immortalized mouse cell line. Preferred immortal cell lines are mouse myeloma cell lines that are sensitive to culture medium containing hypoxanthine, aminopterin and thymidine ("HAT medium"). Any of a number of myeloma cell lines can be used as a fusion partner according to standard techniques, e.g., the P3-NS1/1-Ag4-1, P3-x63-Ag8.653 or Sp2/O-Ag14 myeloma lines. These myeloma lines are available from ATCC.

Alternative to preparing monoclonal antibody-secreting hybridomas, a monoclonal anti-EFG antibody can be identified and isolated by screening a recombinant combinatorial immunoglobulin library (e.g., an antibody phage display library) with EFG to thereby isolate immunoglobulin library members that bind EFG genes. Kits for generating and screening phage display libraries are commercially available (e.g., the Pharmacia Recombinant Phage Antibody System, Catalog No. 27-9400-01; and the Stratagene SurfZAP.TM. Phage Display Kit, Catalog No. 240612).

Additionally, recombinant anti-EFG antibodies, such as chimeric and humanized monoclonal antibodies, comprising both human and non-human portions, which can be made using standard recombinant DNA techniques, are within the scope of the invention. Such chimeric and humanized monoclonal antibodies can be produced by recombinant DNA techniques known in the art.

An anti-EFG antibody (e.g., monoclonal antibody) can be used to isolate EFG by standard techniques, such as affinity chromatography or immunoprecipitation. An anti-EFG antibody can facilitate the purification of natural EFG from cells and of recombinantly produced EFG expressed in host cells. Moreover, an anti-EFG antibody can be used to detect EFG protein (e.g., in a cellular lysate or cell supernatant) in order to evaluate the abundance and pattern of expression of the EFG protein. Anti-EFG antibodies can be used diagnostically to monitor protein levels in tissue as part of a

clinical testing procedure, e.g., to, for example, determine the efficacy of a given treatment regimen.

III. Recombinant Expression Vectors and Host Cells.

5 Another aspect of the invention pertains to vectors, preferably expression vectors, containing a nucleic acid encoding a EFG protein (or a portion thereof). Vectors may have particular use in the preparation of a recombinant protein of the invention.

As used herein, the term "vector" refers to a nucleic acid molecule capable of transporting another nucleic acid to which it has been linked. One type of vector is a
10 "plasmid", which refers to a circular double stranded DNA loop into which additional DNA segments can be ligated. Another type of vector is a viral vector, wherein additional DNA segments can be ligated into the viral genome. Certain vectors are capable of autonomous replication in a host cell into which they are introduced (e.g., bacterial vectors having a bacterial origin of replication and episomal mammalian vectors). Other
15 vectors (e.g., non-episomal mammalian vectors) are integrated into the genome of a host cell upon introduction into the host cell, and thereby are replicated along with the host genome. Moreover, certain vectors are capable of directing the expression of genes to which they are operatively linked. Such vectors are referred to herein as "expression vectors". In general, expression vectors of utility in recombinant DNA techniques are
20 often in the form of plasmids. In the present specification, "plasmid" and "vector" can be used interchangeably as the plasmid is the most commonly used form of vector. However, the invention is intended to include such other forms of expression vectors, such as viral vectors (e.g., replication defective retroviruses, adenoviruses and adeno-associated viruses), which serve equivalent functions.

25 The recombinant expression vectors of the invention comprise a EFG nucleic acid of the invention in a form suitable for expression of the nucleic acid in a host cell, which means that the recombinant expression vectors include one or more regulatory sequences, selected on the basis of the host cells to be used for expression, which is operatively linked to the nucleic acid sequence to be expressed. Within a recombinant expression
30 vector, "operably linked" is intended to mean that the nucleotide sequence of interest is linked to the regulatory sequence(s) in a manner which allows for expression of the

nucleotide sequence (e.g., in an in vitro transcription/translation system or in a host cell when the vector is introduced into the host cell). The term "regulatory sequence" is intended to include promoters, enhancers and other expression control elements (e.g., polyadenylation signals). Such regulatory sequences are described, for example, in

5 Goeddel; Gene Expression Technology: Methods in Enzymology 185, Academic Press, San Diego, Calif. (1990), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. Regulatory sequences include those which direct constitutive expression of a nucleotide sequence in many types of host cell and those which direct expression of the nucleotide sequence only in certain host cells (e.g., tissue-specific regulatory sequences).

10 It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the design of the expression vector can depend on such factors as the choice of the host cell to be transformed, the level of expression of protein desired, etc. The expression vectors of the invention can be introduced into host cells to thereby produce proteins or peptides, including fusion proteins or peptides, encoded by nucleic acids as described herein (e.g., EFG proteins,

15 mutant forms of EFG proteins, fusion proteins, or fragments of any of the preceding proteins, etc.).

The recombinant expression vectors of the invention can be designed for expression of EFG proteins in prokaryotic or eukaryotic cells. For example, EFG proteins can be expressed in bacterial cells such as *E. coli*, insect cells (using baculovirus

20 expression vectors) yeast cells, or mammalian cells. Suitable host cells are discussed further in Goeddel, Gene Expression Technology: Methods in Enzymology 185, Academic Press, San Diego, Calif. (1990), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. Alternatively, the recombinant expression vector can be transcribed and translated in vitro, for example using T7 promoter regulatory sequences

25 and T7 polymerase.

Expression of proteins in prokaryotes is most often carried out in *E. coli* with vectors containing constitutive or inducible promoters directing the expression of either fusion or non-fusion proteins. Fusion vectors add a number of amino acids to a protein encoded therein, usually to the amino terminus of the recombinant protein. Such fusion

30 vectors typically serve three purposes: 1) to increase expression of recombinant protein; 2) to increase the solubility of the recombinant protein; and 3) to aid in the purification of

the recombinant protein by acting as a ligand in affinity purification. Typical fusion expression vectors include pGEX (Pharmacia Biotech Inc; Smith, D. B. and Johnson, K. S. (1988) Gene 67:31-40), pMAL (New England Biolabs, Beverly, Mass.) and pRIT5 (Pharmacia, Piscataway, N.J.), the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties, which fuse glutathione S-transferase (GST), maltose E binding protein, or protein A, respectively, to the target recombinant protein.

Purified fusion proteins can be utilized in EFG activity assays, (e.g., direct assays or competitive assays, or to generate antibodies specific for EFG proteins, for example.

The invention further provides a recombinant expression vector comprising a DNA molecule of the invention cloned into the expression vector in an antisense orientation. That is, the DNA molecule is operatively linked to a regulatory sequence in a manner which allows for expression (by transcription of the DNA molecule) of an RNA molecule which is antisense to EFG mRNA. Regulatory sequences operatively linked to a nucleic acid cloned in the antisense orientation can be chosen which direct the continuous expression of the antisense RNA molecule in a variety of cell types, for instance viral promoters and/or enhancers, or regulatory sequences can be chosen which direct constitutive, tissue specific or cell type specific expression of antisense RNA. The antisense expression vector can be in the form of a recombinant plasmid, phagemid or attenuated virus in which antisense nucleic acids are produced under the control of a high efficiency regulatory region, the activity of which can be determined by the cell type into which the vector is introduced. For a discussion of the regulation of gene expression using antisense genes see Weintraub, H. et al., Antisense RNA as a molecular tool for genetic analysis, Reviews--Trends in Genetics, Vol. 1(1) 1986, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

Of course, in the present invention, antisense vectors are particularly useful for inhibiting EFG genes expression, most preferably *A.fumigatus* EFG genes.

Antisense constructs may be designed to bind to the promoter and other control regions, exons, introns or even exon-intron boundaries of a gene. Antisense RNA constructs, or DNA encoding such antisense RNAs, may be employed to inhibit gene transcription or translation or both within a host cell, either in vitro or in vivo, such as within a host animal, including a human subject.

Although shorter oligomers are easier to make and increase in vivo accessibility, numerous other factors are involved in determining the specificity of hybridization. Both binding affinity and sequence specificity of an oligonucleotide to its complementary target increases with increasing length. It is contemplated that oligonucleotides of 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 or more base pairs will be used. One can readily determine whether a given antisense nucleic acid is effective at targeting of the corresponding host cell gene simply by testing the constructs in vitro to determine whether the endogenous gene's function is affected or whether the expression of related genes having complementary sequences is affected.

Another aspect of the invention pertains to host cells into which a recombinant expression vector of the invention has been introduced. The terms "host cell" and "recombinant host cell" are used interchangeably herein. It is understood that such term refer not only to the particular subject cell but to the progeny or potential progeny of such a cell. Because certain modifications may occur in succeeding generations due to either mutation or environmental influences, such progeny may not, in fact, be identical to the parent cell, but are still included within the scope of the term as used herein.

A host cell can be any prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell. For example, a EFG protein can be expressed in bacterial cells such as *E. coli*, insect cells, yeast or mammalian cells (such as Chinese hamster ovary cells (CHO) or COS cells or human cells).

Vector DNA can be introduced into prokaryotic or eukaryotic cells via conventional transformation or transfection techniques, that can be found in Sambrook, et al. (Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual. 2nd, ed., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y., 1989, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety), and other laboratory manuals.

For stable transfection of mammalian cells, it is known that, depending upon the expression vector and transfection technique used, only a small fraction of cells may integrate the foreign DNA into their genome. In order to identify and select these integrants, a gene that encodes a selectable marker (e.g., resistance to antibiotics) is generally introduced into the host cells along with the gene of interest.

A host cell of the invention, such as a prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cell in culture, can be used to produce (i.e., express) a EFG protein. Accordingly, the invention

further provides methods for producing a EFG protein using the host cells of the invention. In one embodiment, the method comprises culturing the host cell of invention (into which a recombinant expression vector encoding a EFG protein has been introduced) in a suitable medium such that a EFG protein is produced. In another
5 embodiment, the method further comprises isolating a EFG protein from the medium or the host cell.

In another embodiment, the invention encompasses providing a cell capable of expressing a EFG protein, culturing said cell in a suitable medium such that a EFG protein is produced, and isolating or purifying the EFG protein from the medium or cell.

10 In certain indications, it may be desirable to activate transcription at specific times after administration of the gene therapy vector. This may be done with such promoters as those that are hormone or cytokine regulatable.

IV. Drug screening assays.

15 The invention provides a method (also referred to herein as a "screening assay") for identifying inhibitors, i.e., candidate or test compounds or agents (e.g., preferably small molecules, but also peptides, peptidomimetics or other drugs) which bind to EFG proteins, have an inhibitory effect on, for example, EFG expression or preferably EFG activity, or have an inhibitory effect on, for example, the activity of an EFG target
20 molecule. Assays may be cell based or non-cell based assays. Drug screening assays may be binding assays or more preferentially functional assays.

In preferred embodiments, an assay is a cell-based assay in which a cell which expresses a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof is contacted with a test compound and the ability of the test compound to inhibit EFG activity determined.
25 Determining the ability of the test compound to inhibit EFG activity can be accomplished by monitoring the bioactivity of the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof.

The invention further encompasses compounds capable of inhibiting EFG activity. Inhibiting EFG activity refers to the inhibition of EFG gene expression such that fungus growth is inhibited. Preferably, a EFG inhibitor is a selective EFG inhibitor.

30 In a preferred embodiment, an inhibitor is capable of inhibiting EFG activity of at least one EFG protein of SEQ ID

N°3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60,94,98,102,106,110,114,118, 122,126,130,134,138,142,146,150,154,158,162,166,170, or a fragment or a variant thereof as previously described. Compounds will be assayed for the activities indicated in Table 1 and Table 1bis.

- 5 For instance, the following standard enzymatic tests are appropriated : ATP dependant RNA helicase, guanylate kinase, RNA synthetase, SAM decarboxylase, protein kinase, ferro-chelataze.

Assays are made by using compounds already known to have an effect on the activity tested. For instance compounds known to inhibit protein kinase activity will be tested.

- 10 In one embodiment, the invention provides assays for screening candidate or test compounds which are target molecules of a EFG protein or polypeptide or biologically active portion thereof. In another embodiment, the invention provides assays for screening candidate or test compounds which bind to or modulate the activity of a EFG protein or polypeptide or biologically active portion thereof. The test compounds of the
15 present invention can be obtained using any of the numerous approaches in combinatorial library methods known in the art, including: biological libraries; spatially addressable parallel solid phase or solution phase libraries; synthetic library methods requiring deconvolution; the 'one-bead one-compound' library method; and synthetic library methods using affinity chromatography selection. The biological library approach is used
20 with peptide libraries, while the other four approaches are applicable to peptide, non-peptide oligomer or small molecule libraries of compounds (Lam, K. S. (1997) Anticancer Drug Des. 12:145).

- Examples of methods for the synthesis of molecular libraries can be found in the art, for example in: DeWitt et al. (1993) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 90:6909; Erb et al.
25 (1994) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 91:11422; Zuckermann et al. (1994). J. Med. Chem. 37:2678; Cho et al. (1993) Science 261:1303; Carrell et al. (1994) Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. Engl. 33:2059; Carell et al. (1994) Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. Engl. 33:2061; and in Gallop et al. (1994) J. Med. Chem. 37:1233.

- Libraries of compounds may be presented in solution (e.g., Houghten (1992)
30 Biotechniques 13:412-421), or on beads (Lam (1991) Nature 354:82-84), chips (Fodor (1993) Nature 364:555-556), bacteria (Ladner U.S. Pat. No. 5,223,409), spores (Ladner

U.S. Pat. No. '409), plasmids (Cull et al. (1992) Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 89:1865-1869) or on phage (Scott and Smith (1990) Science 249:386-390); (Devin (1990) Science 249:404-406); (Cwirla et al. (1990) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 87:6378-6382); (Felici (1991) J. Mol. Biol. 222:301-310); (Ladner supra.).

5 Determining the ability of the test compound to inhibit EFG activity can also be accomplished, for example, by coupling the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof with a radioisotope or enzymatic label such that binding of the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof to its cognate target molecule can be determined by detecting the labeled EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof in a complex. For
10 example, compounds (e.g., EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof) can be labeled with ¹²⁵I, ³⁵S, ¹⁴C, or ³H, either directly or indirectly, and the radioisotope detected by direct counting of radioemmission or by scintillation counting. Alternatively, compounds can be enzymatically labeled with, for example, horseradish peroxidase, alkaline phosphatase, or luciferase, and the enzymatic label
15 detected by determination of conversion of an appropriate substrate to product.

It is also within the scope of this invention to determine the ability of a compound (e.g., EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof) to interact with its cognate target molecule without the labeling of any of the interactants. For example, a microphysiometer can be used to detect the interaction of a compound with its cognate target molecule
20 without the labeling of either the compound or the receptor. McConnell, H. M. *et al.* (1992) Science 257:1906-1912. A microphysiometer such as a cytosensor is an analytical instrument that measures the rate at which a cell acidifies its environment using a light-addressable potentiometric sensor (LAPS). Changes in this acidification rate can be used as an indicator of the interaction between compound and receptor.

25 In a preferred embodiment, the assay comprises contacting a cell which expresses a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof, with a target molecule to form an assay mixture, contacting the assay mixture with a test compound, and determining the ability of the test compound to inhibit the activity of the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof, wherein determining the ability of the test compound to inhibit the
30 activity of the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof, comprises determining the ability of the test compound to inhibit a biological activity of the EFG expressing cell

(e.g., determining the ability of the test compound to inhibit transduction or protein:protein interactions).

In another preferred embodiment, the assay comprises contacting a cell which is responsive to a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof, with a EFG protein or
5 biologically-active portion thereof, to form an assay mixture, contacting the assay mixture with a test compound, and determining the ability of the test compound to modulate the activity of the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof, wherein determining the ability of the test compound to modulate the activity of the EFG protein or biologically
10 active portion thereof comprises determining the ability of the test compound to modulate a biological activity of the EFG gene-responsive cell (e.g., determining the ability of the test compound to modulate signal transduction or protein:protein interactions).

In another embodiment, an assay is a cell-based assay comprising contacting a cell expressing a EFG target molecule with a test compound and determining the ability of the test compound to modulate (e.g. stimulate or inhibit) the activity of the EFG target
15 molecule. Determining the ability of the test compound to modulate the activity of a EFG target molecule can be accomplished, for example, by determining the ability of the EFG protein to bind to or interact with the EFG target molecule.

Determining the ability of the EFG protein to bind to or interact with a EFG target molecule can be accomplished by one of the methods described above for determining
20 direct binding. In a preferred embodiment, determining the ability of the EFG protein to bind to or interact with a EFG target molecule can be accomplished by determining the activity of the target molecule. For example, the activity of the target molecule can be determined by detecting induction of a cellular second messenger of the target, detecting catalytic/enzymatic activity of the target an appropriate substrate, detecting the induction
25 of a reporter gene (comprising a target-responsive regulatory element operatively linked to a nucleic acid encoding a detectable marker, e.g., luciferase), or detecting a target-regulated cellular response, for example, signal transduction or protein:protein interactions.

In yet another embodiment, an assay of the present invention is a cell-free assay in
30 which a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof is contacted with a test compound and the ability of the test compound to bind to the EFG protein or biologically

active portion thereof is determined. Binding of the test compound to the EFG protein can be determined either directly or indirectly as described above. In a preferred embodiment, the assay includes contacting the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof with a known compound which binds EFG (e.g., a EFG target molecule) to form an assay mixture, contacting the assay mixture with a test compound, and determining the ability of the test compound to interact with a EFG protein, wherein determining the ability of the test compound to interact with a EFG protein comprises determining the ability of the test compound to preferentially bind to EFG or biologically active portion thereof as compared to the known compound.

In another embodiment, the assay is a cell-free assay in which a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof is contacted with a test compound and the ability of the test compound to modulate (preferably inhibit) the activity of the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof is determined. Determining the ability of the test compound to modulate the activity of a EFG protein can be accomplished, for example, by determining the ability of the EFG protein to bind to a EFG target molecule by one of the methods described above for determining direct binding. Determining the ability of the EFG protein to bind to a EFG target molecule can also be accomplished using a technology such as real-time Biomolecular Interaction Analysis (BIA). Sjolander, S. and Urbaniczky, C. (1991) *Anal. Chem.* 63:2338-2345 and Szabo et al. (1995) *Curr. Opin. Struct. Biol.* 5:699-705. As used herein, "BIA" is a technology for studying biospecific interactions in real time, without labeling any of the interactants (e.g., BIAcore). Changes in the optical phenomenon of surface plasmon resonance (SPR) can be used as an indication of real-time reactions between biological molecules.

In an alternative embodiment, determining the ability of the test compound to modulate the activity of a EFG protein can be accomplished by determining the ability of the EFG protein to further modulate the activity of a downstream effector (e.g., a growth factor mediated signal transduction pathway component) of a EFG target molecule. For example, the activity of the effector molecule on an appropriate target can be determined or the binding of the effector to an appropriate target can be determined as previously described.

In yet another embodiment, the cell-free assay involves contacting a EFG protein

or biologically active portion thereof with a known compound which binds the EFG protein to form an assay mixture, contacting the assay mixture with a test compound, and determining the ability of the test compound to interact with the EFG protein, wherein determining the ability of the test compound to interact with the EFG protein comprises
5 determining the ability of the EFG protein to preferentially bind to or modulate the activity of a EFG target molecule.

The cell-free assays of the present invention are amenable to use of both soluble and/or membrane-bound forms of isolated proteins (e.g. EFG proteins or biologically active portions thereof or molecules to which EFG targets bind). In the case of cell-free
10 assays in which a membrane-bound form an isolated protein is used it may be desirable to utilize a solubilizing agent such that the membrane-bound form of the isolated protein is maintained in solution.

In more than one embodiment of the above assay methods of the present invention, it may be desirable to immobilize either EFG or its target molecule to facilitate
15 separation of complexed from uncomplexed forms of one or both of the proteins, as well as to accommodate automation of the assay. Binding of a test compound to a EFG protein, or interaction of a EFG protein with a target molecule in the presence and absence of a candidate compound, can be accomplished in any vessel suitable for containing the reactants. Examples of such vessels include microtitre plates, test tubes,
20 and micro-centrifuge tubes. In one embodiment, a fusion protein can be provided which adds a domain that allows one or both of the proteins to be bound to a matrix. For example, glutathione-S-transferase/EFG fusion proteins or glutathione-S-transferase/target fusion proteins can be adsorbed onto glutathione sepharose beads (Sigma Chemical, St. Louis, Mo.) or glutathione derivatized microtitre plates, which are
25 then combined with the test compound or the test compound and either the non-adsorbed target protein or EFG protein, and the mixture incubated under conditions conducive to complex formation (e.g., at physiological conditions for salt and pH). Following incubation, the beads or microtitre plate wells are washed to remove any unbound components, the matrix immobilized in the case of beads, complex determined either
30 directly or indirectly, for example, as described above. Alternatively, the complexes can be dissociated from the matrix, and the level of EFG binding or activity determined using

standard techniques.

Other techniques for immobilizing proteins on matrices can also be used in the screening assays of the invention. For example, either a EFG protein or a EFG target molecule can be immobilized utilizing conjugation of biotin and streptavidin. Biotinylated EFG protein or target molecules can be prepared from biotin-NHS (N-hydroxy-succinimide) using techniques well known in the art (e.g., biotinylation kit, Pierce Chemicals, Rockford, Ill.), and immobilized in the wells of streptavidin-coated 96 well plates (Pierce Chemical). Alternatively, antibodies reactive with EFG protein or target molecules but which do not interfere with binding of the EFG protein to its target molecule can be derivatized to the wells of the plate, and unbound target or EFG protein trapped in the wells by antibody conjugation. Methods for detecting such complexes, in addition to those described above for the GST-immobilized complexes, include immunodetection of complexes using antibodies reactive with the EFG protein or target molecule, as well as enzyme-linked assays which rely on detecting an enzymatic activity associated with the EFG protein or target molecule.

In another embodiment, modulators of EFG expression are identified in a method wherein a cell is contacted with a candidate compound and the expression of EFG mRNA or protein in the cell is determined. The level of expression of EFG mRNA or protein in the presence of the candidate compound is compared to the level of expression of EFG mRNA or protein in the absence of the candidate compound. The candidate compound can then be identified as a modulator of EFG expression based on this comparison. For example, when expression of EFG mRNA or protein is greater (statistically significantly greater) in the presence of the candidate compound than in its absence, the candidate compound is identified as a stimulator of EFG mRNA or protein expression. Alternatively, when expression of EFG mRNA or protein is less (statistically significantly less) in the presence of the candidate compound than in its absence, the candidate compound is identified as an inhibitor of EFG mRNA or protein expression. The level of EFG mRNA or protein expression in the cells can be determined by methods described herein for detecting EFG mRNA or protein.

In yet another aspect of the invention, the EFG proteins can be used as "bait proteins" in a two-hybrid assay or three-hybrid assay (see, e.g., U.S. Pat. No. 5,283,317;

Zervos et al. (1993) Cell 72:223-232).

This invention further pertains to novel agents identified by the above-described screening assays and to processes for producing such agents by use of these assays. Accordingly, in one embodiment, the present invention includes a compound or agent obtainable by a method comprising the steps of any one of the aforementioned screening assays (e.g., cell-based assays or cell-free assays). For example, in one embodiment, the invention includes a compound or agent obtainable by a method comprising contacting a cell which expresses a EFG target molecule with a test compound and the determining the ability of the test compound to bind to, or modulate the activity of, the EFG target molecule. In another embodiment, the invention includes a compound or agent obtainable by a method comprising contacting a cell which expresses a EFG target molecule with a EFG protein or biologically-active portion thereof, to form an assay mixture, contacting the assay mixture with a test compound, and determining the ability of the test compound to interact with, or modulate the activity of, the EFG target molecule. In another embodiment, the invention includes a compound or agent obtainable by a method comprising contacting a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof with a test compound and determining the ability of the test compound to bind to, or modulate (e.g., stimulate or inhibit) the activity of, the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof. In yet another embodiment, the present invention included a compound or agent obtainable by a method comprising contacting a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof with a known compound which binds the EFG protein to form an assay mixture, contacting the assay mixture with a test compound, and determining the ability of the test compound to interact with, or modulate the activity of the EFG protein.

Accordingly, it is within the scope of this invention to further use an agent identified as described herein in an appropriate animal model. For example, an agent identified as described herein (e.g., a EFG modulating agent, an antisense EFG nucleic acid molecule, a EFG-specific antibody, or a EFG-binding partner) can be used in an animal model to determine the efficacy, toxicity, or side effects of treatment with such an agent. Alternatively, an agent identified as described herein can be used in an animal model to determine the mechanism of action of such an agent. Furthermore, this invention pertains to uses of novel agents identified by the above-described screening assays for

treatments as described herein.

The present invention also pertains to uses of novel agents identified by the above-described screening assays for diagnoses, prognoses, and treatments as described herein. Accordingly, it is within the scope of the present invention to use such agents in the design, formulation, synthesis, manufacture, and/or production of a drug or pharmaceutical composition for use in diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment, as described herein. For example, in one embodiment, the present invention includes a method of synthesizing or producing a drug or pharmaceutical composition by reference to the structure and/or properties of a compound obtainable by one of the above-described screening assays. For example, a drug or pharmaceutical composition can be synthesized based on the structure and/or properties of a compound obtained by a method in which a cell which expresses a EFG target molecule is contacted with a test compound and the ability of the test compound to bind to, or modulate the activity of, the EFG target molecule is determined. In another exemplary embodiment, the present invention includes a method of synthesizing or producing a drug or pharmaceutical composition based on the structure and/or properties of a compound obtainable by a method in which a EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof is contacted with a test compound and the ability of the test compound to bind to, or inhibit the activity of, the EFG protein or biologically active portion thereof is determined.

V. Methods of treatment.

EFG inhibitors identified according to the methods in the section titled "Drug Screening Assays" can be further tested for their ability to ameliorate or prevent the pathologies associated to *Aspergillus* fungus, and more particularly to *A.fumigatus*, namely invasive pulmonary aspergillosis.

An "individual" treated by the methods of this invention is a vertebrate, particularly a mammal (including model animals of human disease, farm animals, sport animals, and pets), and typically a human.

"Treatment" refers to clinical intervention in an attempt to alter the natural course of the individual being treated, and may be performed either for prophylaxis or during the

course of clinical pathology. Desirable effects include preventing occurrence or recurrence of disease, alleviation of symptoms, diminishment of any direct or indirect pathological consequences of the disease, such as hyperresponsiveness, inflammation, or necrosis, lowering the rate of disease progression, amelioration or palliation of the disease state, and remission or improved prognosis. The "pathology" associated with a disease condition is anything that compromises the well-being, normal physiology, or quality of life of the affected individual.

Treatment is performed by administering an effective amount of a EFG inhibitor. An "effective amount" is an amount sufficient to effect a beneficial or desired clinical result, and can be administered in one or more doses.

The criteria for assessing response to therapeutic modalities employing the compositions of this invention are dictated by the specific condition, measured according to standard medical procedures appropriate for the condition.

VI. Pharmaceutical Compositions.

Compounds capable of inhibiting EFG activity, preferably small molecules but also including peptides, EFG antisense nucleic acid molecules, EFG protein inhibitors, and anti-EFG antibodies (also referred to herein as "active compounds") of the invention can be incorporated into pharmaceutical compositions suitable for administration. Such compositions typically comprise a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. As used herein the language "pharmaceutically acceptable carrier" is intended to include any and all solvents, dispersion media, coatings, antibacterial and antifungal agents, isotonic and absorption delaying agents, and the like, compatible with pharmaceutical administration. The use of such media and agents for pharmaceutically active substances is well known in the art. Supplementary active compounds can also be incorporated into the compositions.

A pharmaceutical composition of the invention is formulated to be compatible with its intended route of administration. Examples of routes of administration include parenteral, e.g., intravenous, intradermal, subcutaneous, oral (e.g., inhalation), transdermal (topical), transmucosal, and rectal administration. Solutions or suspensions used for parenteral, intradermal, or subcutaneous application can include the following

components: a sterile diluent such as water for injection, saline solution, fixed oils, polyethylene glycols, glycerine, propylene glycol or other synthetic solvents; antibacterial agents such as benzyl alcohol or methyl parabens; antioxidants such as ascorbic acid or sodium bisulfite; chelating agents such as ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid; buffers such as acetates, citrates or phosphates and agents for the adjustment of tonicity such as sodium chloride or dextrose. pH can be adjusted with acids or bases, such as hydrochloric acid or sodium hydroxide. The parenteral preparation can be enclosed in ampoules, disposable syringes or multiple dose vials made of glass or plastic.

Pharmaceutical compositions suitable for injectable use include sterile aqueous solutions (where water soluble) or dispersions and sterile powders for the extemporaneous preparation of sterile injectable solutions or dispersion. For intravenous administration, suitable carriers include physiological saline, bacteriostatic water, Cremophor EL.TM. (BASF, Parsippany, N.J.) or phosphate buffered saline (PBS). In all cases, the composition must be sterile and should be fluid to the extent that easy syringability exists. It must be stable under the conditions of manufacture and storage and must be preserved against the contaminating action of microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi. The carrier can be a solvent or dispersion medium containing, for example, water, ethanol, polyol (for example, glycerol, propylene glycol, and liquid polyethylene glycol, and the like), and suitable mixtures thereof. The proper fluidity can be maintained, for example, by the use of a coating such as lecithin, by the maintenance of the required particle size in the case of dispersion and by the use of surfactants. Prevention of the action of microorganisms can be achieved by various antibacterial and antifungal agents, for example, parabens, chlorobutanol, phenol, ascorbic acid, thimerosal, and the like. In many cases, it will be preferable to include isotonic agents, for example, sugars, polyalcohols such as manitol, sorbitol, sodium chloride in the composition. Prolonged absorption of the injectable compositions can be brought about by including in the composition an agent which delays absorption, for example, aluminum monostearate and gelatin.

Where the active compound is a protein, peptide or anti-EFG antibody, sterile injectable solutions can be prepared by incorporating the active compound in the required amount in an appropriate solvent with one or a combination of ingredients enumerated

above, as required, followed by filtered sterilization. Generally, dispersions are prepared by incorporating the active compound into a sterile vehicle which contains a basic dispersion medium and the required other ingredients from those enumerated above. In the case of sterile powders for the preparation of sterile injectable solutions, the preferred methods of preparation are vacuum drying and freeze-drying which yields a powder of the active ingredient plus any additional desired ingredient from a previously sterile-filtered solution thereof.

Oral compositions generally include an inert diluent or an edible carrier. They can be enclosed in gelatin capsules or compressed into tablets. For the purpose of oral therapeutic administration, the active compound can be incorporated with excipients and used in the form of tablets, troches, or capsules. For administration by inhalation, the compounds are delivered in the form of an aerosol spray from pressured container or dispenser which contains a suitable propellant, e.g., a gas such as carbon dioxide, or a nebulizer. Systemic administration can also be by transmucosal or transdermal means. For transmucosal or transdermal administration, penetrants appropriate to the barrier to be permeated are used in the formulation. Such penetrants are generally known in the art, and include, for example, for transmucosal administration, detergents, bile salts, and fusidic acid derivatives. Transmucosal administration can be accomplished through the use of nasal sprays or suppositories. For transdermal administration, the active compounds are formulated into ointments, salves, gels, or creams as generally known in the art. Most preferably, active compound is delivered to a subject by intravenous injection.

In one embodiment, the active compounds are prepared with carriers that will protect the compound against rapid elimination from the body, such as a controlled release formulation, including implants and microencapsulated delivery systems. Biodegradable, biocompatible polymers can be used, such as ethylene vinyl acetate, polyanhydrides, polyglycolic acid, collagen, polyorthoesters, and polylactic acid. Methods for preparation of such formulations will be apparent to those skilled in the art, for example, as described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,522,811, or are commercially available.

It is especially advantageous to formulate oral or preferably parenteral compositions in dosage unit form for ease of administration and uniformity of dosage.

Dosage unit form as used herein refers to physically discrete units suited as unitary dosages for the subject to be treated; each unit containing a predetermined quantity of active compound calculated to produce the desired therapeutic effect in association with the required pharmaceutical carrier. The specification for the dosage unit forms of the invention are dictated by and directly dependent on the unique characteristics of the active compound and the particular therapeutic effect to be achieved, and the limitations inherent in the art of compounding such an active compound for the treatment of individuals.

Toxicity and therapeutic efficacy of such compounds can be determined by standard pharmaceutical procedures in cell cultures or experimental animals, e.g., for determining the LD50 (the dose lethal to 50% of the population) and the ED50 (the dose therapeutically effective in 50% of the population). The dose ratio between toxic and therapeutic effects is the therapeutic index and it can be expressed as the ratio LD50/ED50. Compounds which exhibit large therapeutic indices are preferred. While compounds that exhibit toxic side effects may be used, care should be taken to design a delivery system that targets such compounds to the site of affected tissue in order to minimize potential damage to uninfected cells and, thereby, reduce side effects.

The data obtained from the cell culture assays and animal studies can be used in formulating a range of dosage for use in humans. The dosage of such compounds lies preferably within a range of circulating concentrations that include the ED50 with little or no toxicity. The dosage may vary within this range depending upon the dosage form employed and the route of administration utilized. For any compound used in the method of the invention, the therapeutically effective dose can be estimated initially from cell culture assays. A dose may be formulated in animal models to achieve a circulating plasma concentration range that includes the IC50 (i.e., the concentration of the test compound which achieves a half-maximal inhibition of symptoms) as determined in cell culture. Such information can be used to more accurately determine useful doses in humans. Levels in plasma may be measured, for example, by high performance liquid chromatography.

The pharmaceutical compositions can be included in a container, pack, or dispenser together with instructions for administration.

VII. Diagnostic and Prognostic Uses

The nucleic acid molecules, proteins, protein homologues, and antibodies described herein can be used in one or more of the following methods: diagnostic assays, prognostic assays, monitoring clinical trials, and pharmacogenetics; and in drug screening and methods of treatment (e.g., therapeutic and prophylactic) as further described herein.

The invention provides diagnostic and prognostic assays for detecting EFG members, as further described. Also provided are diagnostic and prognostic assays for detecting interactions between EFG members and EFG target molecules.

10 The isolated nucleic acid molecules of the invention can be used, for example, to detect EFG mRNA (e.g., in a biological sample) or a genetic alteration in a EFG gene, and to modulate a EFG activity, as described further below. The EFG proteins can be used to screen for drugs or compounds which modulate, preferably inhibit EFG activity.

Accordingly one embodiment of the present invention involves a method of use (e.g., a diagnostic assay, prognostic assay, or a prophylactic/therapeutic method of treatment) wherein a molecule of the present invention (e.g., a EFG protein, EFG nucleic acid, or most preferably a EFG inhibitor or activator) is used.

VIII. Fungicidal Compositions.

20 The invention also deals with fungicidal incorporating at least one compound capable to inhibit fungal growth, by inhibiting EFG genes, in particular in diseases of plants due to phytopathogenic fungi, namely *Botrytis cinerea*, *Mycosphaerella graminicola*, *Stagnospora nodorum*, *Blumeria graminis*, *Colleotrichum lindemuthianum*, *Puccinia graminis*, *Leptosphaeria maculans*, *Fusarium oxysporum*, *Fusarium graminearum*, *Venturia inaequalis*, most preferably fungi of the genus *Magnaporthe*, even most preferably *Magnaporthe grisea*.

The invention thus also provides a method of combating fungi at a locus infested or liable to be infested therewith, which comprises applying to the locus the compound of the invention.

The invention also provides an agricultural composition comprising the compound of the invention in admixture with an agriculturally acceptable diluent or carrier.

The composition can comprise one or more additional active ingredients, for example compounds known to possess plant-growth regulant, herbicidal, fungicidal (such as metalaxyl, oxadixyl, ofurace, benalaxyl and furalaxyl; cymoxanil; mancozeb; chlorothalonil; folpet; captan; famoxadone; fenamidone; spiroxamine; fluazinam; dimethomorph; strobilurins, such as kresoxim-methyl, azoxystrobin and trifloxystrobin, pyrimethanil, cyprodinil; mepanipyrin; and iprodione), insecticidal or acaricidal properties.

The composition of the invention may include for example a dispersing agent, emulsifying agent or wetting agent. Usually they are in the form of an aqueous concentrate.

The concentration of the active ingredient in the composition of the present invention, as applied to plants is preferably within the range of 0.0001 to 1.0 percent by weight, especially 0.0001 to 0.01 percent by weight. In a primary composition, the amount of active ingredient can vary widely and can be, for example, from 5 to 95 percent by weight of the composition.

In the method of the invention, the compound is generally applied to seeds, plants or their habitat. Thus, the compound can be applied directly to the soil before, at or after drilling so that the presence of active compound in the soil can control the growth of fungi which may attack seeds. When the soil is treated directly the active compound can be applied in any manner which allows it to be intimately mixed with the soil such as by spraying, by broadcasting a solid form of granules, or by applying the active ingredient at the same time as drilling by inserting it in the same drill as the seeds. A suitable application rate is within the range of from 5 to 1000 g per hectare, more preferably from 10 to 500 g per hectare.

Alternatively, the active compound can be applied directly to the plant by, for example, spraying or dusting either at the time when the fungus has begun to appear on the plant or before the appearance of fungus as a protective measure. In both such cases the preferred mode of application is by foliar spraying. It is generally important to obtain

good control of fungi in the early stages of plant growth as this is the time when the plant can be most severely damaged. The spray or dust can conveniently contain a pre- or post-emergence herbicide if this is thought necessary. Sometimes, it is practicable to treat the roots of a plant before or during planting, for example, by dipping the roots in a suitable liquid or solid composition. When the active compound is applied directly to the plant a suitable rate of application is from 0.025 to 5 kg per hectare, preferably from 0.05 to 1 kg per hectare.

Having generally described this invention, a further understanding can be obtained by reference to certain specific examples which are provided herein for purposes of illustration only, and are not intended to be limiting unless otherwise specified.

Example 1: *A. fumigatus* strain construction.

Media and growth conditions were as follows. *A. fumigatus* strains were propagated at 37°C on complete medium or minimal medium with 0.5 mM of various nitrogen sources (sodium glutamate, ammonium tartrate, sodium nitrate, sodium nitrite and hypoxanthine) (Cove 1966). Uridine and uracil were added at a concentration of 5 mM when appropriate. Liquid cultures used for DNA-mediated transformation and genomic DNA preparation were grown in YG (0.5% Yeast Extract, 2% glucose). DNA-mediated transformation was achieved either on protoplasts as described previously (d'Enfert 1996; Osmani *et al.* 1987) or by electroporation of intact conidia as described (Weidner *et al.* 1998).

A. fumigatus stable diploids appropriate for transposon mutagenesis were obtained using the following procedure. In summary, insertional mutagenesis (Weidner *et al.* 1998) of strain CEA17 has led to the isolation of spore color mutants CEA82 and CEA85. White strain CEA88 and reddish strain CEA94 are chlorate resistant derivatives of CEA82 and CEA85 with uncharacterized mutations in a gene involved in the biosynthesis of the molybdene cofactor (*cnx*) and in the nitrate reductase gene (*niaD*), respectively. Strains CEA125 (*w1, cnx1, pyrG1*) and CEA129 (*r7, niaD2, pyrG1*) were obtained from strains CEA88 and CEA94 by growth on media containing 5-fluoro-orotic acid (1 mg/ml) which selects for *pyrG* mutants. Simultaneous growth of CEA125 and CEA129 on minimal

medium with nitrate as sole nitrogen source yielded heterokaryons that produced grey-green spores similar to that of *A. fumigatus* haploid wild-type strains. This led to the isolation of the stable diploid strain CEA131 (*wl/+*, *+r7*, *cnx1/+*, *+niaD2*, *pyrG1/pyrG1*). A chlorate resistant derivative of CEA131 was identified that was unable to use nitrate as the sole nitrogen source and was defective at both *niaD* alleles. This strain is referred to as CEA153 (*wl/+*, *+r7*, *cnx1/+*, *niaD4/niaD2*, *pyrG1/pyrG1*). On minimal medium containing nitrate, spontaneous reversion of the haploid strain CEA113 and the diploid strain CEA153 for nitrate utilization was not observed.

10 **Example 2: in vivo transposon mutagenesis in *A. fumigatus*.**

Plasmid pNIL160 has been described³⁰. A 2.2 kb *Bam*HI fragment from ppyrG containing the *A. nidulans pyrG* gene was cloned at the *Nhe*I restriction site in *impala160*, yielding pNIpyr. *Nde*I-digested pNIpyr was introduced into genomic DNA of strains CEA113 and CEA153 by electroporation of intact conidia as described¹⁹ yielding the haploid strain CEA165 and the diploid strains CEA225, 226 and 227, respectively. *impala160::pyrG* transposition occurs on minimal medium containing nitrate supplemented with 0.02% Triton X-100 at 37°C for 3 days. Genomic DNA preparation and Southern analysis techniques were essentially performed according to Sambrook *et al.* (1989) and Ausubel *et al.* (1992).

20 Plasmid pNIpyr, a derivative of pNIL160³⁰, carries the *A. nidulans niaD* gene encoding nitrate reductase with a copy of *impala160* inserted 10 bp upstream of the translation initiation codon of *niaD* and modified by the insertion of the *A. nidulans pyrG* gene between the 3'-end of the transposase-encoding gene and the 3' inverted terminal repeat. pNIpyr was introduced in *A. fumigatus* strain CEA153, a stable *pyrG*, *niaD* diploid strain, heterozygous for spore color markers. Because of the insertion of *impala160::pyrG* into the *niaD* promoter, the *niaD* allele carried by pNIpyr is not functional. However, when diploid transformants were grown on selective minimal medium with nitrate as sole nitrogen source, *pyrG*⁺, *NiaD*⁺ revertants were observed at a frequency of 10⁻⁵-10⁻⁶. Southern analysis showed that these transformants have only one copy of *impala160::pyrG* integrated into their genome and that all the revertants resulted of *impala* transposition events from the *niaD* promoter to an apparent random site located

elsewhere in the *A. fumigatus* genome (Fig. 2). Sequence analysis of the *niaD* promoter region in all revertants revealed a footprint of usually 5 bp associated with *impala* excision. Characterization of integration targets by sequencing and comparison to public genomic sequences (Tables 1 and 1bis, and data not shown) revealed that the transposition of *impala160::pyrG* in *A. fumigatus* 1) occurs at a genomic TA dinucleotide which is duplicated during the integration process; 2) is apparently random without sequence preference (except the TA dinucleotide); and 3) is not associated with genomic rearrangements. All of these characteristics are typical for transposition of the *Tc1-mariner* family members and was previously observed for *impala160* transposition events in *F. oxysporum*²⁸, *A. nidulans*²⁹ and *M. grisea*³⁰. Therefore, *impala* appears as the most suitable tool to generate random tagged mutation in *A. fumigatus* since insertional mutagenesis through DNA-mediated transformation results in various types of rearrangements of the transforming and genomic DNA.

Example 3: parasexual genetic screening.

Haploidization of *A. fumigatus* diploid strains was conducted on selective haploidization medium [complete medium containing 1.2 µg/ml benomyl (ALDRICH, 10 mg/ml in DMSO)] or on non-selective haploidization medium (selective haploidization medium plus uridine and uracil) for 5 days at 37°C. Haploid progenies are easily identified by the production of white and reddish-colored sectors after haploidization of grey-green diploid strains.

Three diploid transformants (namely *A. fumigatus* CEA225, CEA226 and CEA227) were used to generate a collection of random diploid heterozygous revertants. Haploidization of heterozygous strains was induced by the destabilizing reagent benomyl and results from mitotic chromosomal non-disjunction^{18,31}. Since each revertant has a single mutated chromosomal locus tagged by *impala160::pyrG*, parasexual genetics on selective and non-selective haploidization media permits to distinguish insertions that occur in non-essential versus essential chromosomal targets (Fig. 1). Strains CEA225, CEA226, CEA227 and 97% of 2,386 revertants showed no difference on selective and non-selective haploidization media after two independent tests, indicating that integration of pNlpyr into the genome of the parental transformants and integration of *impala160::pyrG*

in the diploid revertants had not occurred into an essential chromosomal region. On selective haploidization medium, 73 revertants (3%) did not yield haploid conidia as evidenced by the absence of colored sectors (Fig. 3). Diploid strains of *A. fumigatus* are hypersensitive to benomyl and only haploid strains can grow at the benomyl concentration used³¹. However, the transient formation of aneuploids leads to the formation of a cal on selective haploidization medium that potentially over-grow haploid strains with morphological defects. To identify mutants which could have been selected in our screening because of the slow growth of haploid progenies rather than the lethality of the insertion, *ca.* 10^6 haploid progenies obtained on non-selective haploidization medium were tested for the presence of *impala160::pyrG* by growth on selective medium. Twenty nine diploid revertants ($29/2,386 = 1.2\%$) never yielded haploid $pyrG^+$ progenies and were defined as carrying an integration of *impala160::pyrG* into a chromosomal locus essential for *A. fumigatus* growth.

Example 4A: sequence determination.

Genomic sequences bordering *impala160::pyrG* are determined by an adaptation of a two-step PCR strategy developed by Chun *et al.*³⁶ and using transposon specific primers. More precisely concerning the two step PCR, first, *ca.* 100 ng of genomic DNA were amplified in 50 μ l using oligonucleotides ppyr1 and PCRall or ppyr3 and PCRall (4 pmol/ μ l final) and the following amplification protocol: a denaturation step at 94°C for 3 min. followed by 5 cycles of the following steps: denaturation at 94°C for 30 sec, annealing at 35°C for 30 sec, extension at 72°C for 1 min, and 30 cycles of the following steps: denaturation at 94°C for 30 sec, annealing at 45°C for 30 sec, extension at 72°C for 1 min. A last elongation step was done at 72°C for 3 min. Final concentrations for $MgCl_2$ and dNTPs were 3 mM and 0.2 mM, respectively. One microliter of the PCR reaction was subjected to a second amplification using similar reaction conditions and oligonucleotides ppyr2 and PCRa12N (if ppyr1 and PCRall had been used in the first reaction) or ppyr4 and PCRa12N (if ppyr3 and PCRall had been used in the first reaction). The following amplification protocol was used: 30 cycles of the following steps: denaturation at 94°C for 30 sec, annealing at 60°C for 30 sec, extension at 72°C for 1 min. A last elongation step was done at 72°C for 3 min. In some instances,

oligonucleotides PCRa13, PCRa14, and PCRa15 were used in place of PCRall. PCR products were separated by electrophoresis on a 2% TBE-agarose gel and major PCR products were purified with the Qiaquick Gel Purification Kit (Qiagen, France) according to the supplier's instructions. Purified PCR products are sequenced using ppyr2 or ppyr4 as primers (ESGS, Evry, France). Nucleotide sequences obtained in this manner and trimmed for ppyrG sequences are compared using blastx or blastn (Altschul *et al.* 1990) to protein databases and to the preliminary sequence data of the *A. fumigatus* genome project which were obtained from The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) website (<http://www.tigr.org>).

- More precisely concerning the transposon specific primers, two primers were used [primers Imp1: ATGAAGGCGTAAGTTCCTTGC (SEQ ID No.61) and Imp2: GTGTGGAGGAAGAAAGAGC (SEQ ID No.62)]. Sequencing reactions were performed by ESGS (Evry, France) with the primer Imp2 directly on the major PCR product purified from agarose gel using the Qiaquick gel extraction kit (QIAGEN). After elimination of transposon sequences, genomic tags were compared to the *A. fumigatus* TIGR genomic data (www.tigr.org). Results present in this study were obtained from the sequence release of November 14, 2001. At this time, the shotgun sequencing of *A. fumigatus* progressed to 6X sequence coverage (28.7 Mb in 1,578 assemblies of over 1,000 bp in size). From TIGR data, specific primers were designed and used in standard PCR reactions and confirmed the absence of genomic rearrangements after transposon integration and the presence of a wild type chromosomal locus in each of the diploid revertants tested.

Table 2. Primer sequences

ppyr1 (5'end)	GGAAGACGGGCAGTTAGTCC (SEQ ID No.63)
ppyr3 (3'end)	CCCAGGCTTTACACTTTATGC (SEQ ID No.64)
PCRa1 1	GGCCACGCGTCGACTAGTAG(N) ₁₀ GATAT (SEQ ID No.65)
PCRa1 3	GGCCACGCGTCGACTAGTAC(N) ₁₀ ACGTC (SEQ ID No.66)
PCRa1 4	GGCCACGCGTCGACTAGTAC(N) ₁₀ TGGAC (SEQ ID No.67)
PCRa1 5	GGCCACGCGTCGACTAGTAC(N) ₁₀ ACGTG (SEQ ID No.68)
ppyr2N (5'end)	CGAAGTTGACGTTCA GTATGC (SEQ ID No.69)

ppyr4N (3'end)	TGACCATGATTACGCCAAGC (SEQ ID No.70)
PCRal 2N	GGCCACGCGTCGACTAGTAC (SEQ ID No.71)

Ppyr primers are specific of the ppyrG plasmid used for insertional mutagenesis. The pentamer at the 5' end of the random primer (PCRal1, 3, 4 and 5) is expected to bind once in a kb. It is chosen according to the GC% of *A. fumigatus* (ca.50%) and does not occur
5 in the region of ppyrG located between ppyr primers and the linearized plasmid end.

Example 4B: characterization of *A. fumigatus* essential genes.

Genomic sequences bordering *impala160::pyrG* were obtained for 21 of the 29 diploid strains mentioned above. Except for one strain (4-1-3), corresponding genomic regions
10 were identified (Table 1 and Table 1bis) in the public preliminary sequence data of the *A. fumigatus* genome available at The Institute for Genomic Research (<http://www.tigr.org>). Similarity searches of the NCBI non-redundant sequence database performed using the BLASTx algorithm³² identified three main categories of insertional mutants (Tables 1 and 1bis). The first category includes 15 strains that have an insertion of
15 *impala160::pyrG* into genes with homologues in other fungal species. The second category is composed of three strains with *impala160::pyrG* integration occurring into intergenic regions. The last category includes two strains with *impala160::pyrG* integration in genes without homologues in public databases and classified as *A. fumigatus* specific essential genes.

20 In nine of the fifteen strains of the first category, integration of *impala160::pyrG* occurs into homologues of genes demonstrated as essential for *S. cerevisiae* growth (Tables 1 and 1bis). These genes are involved in a broad range of essential biological processes such as protein synthesis (*YGL245W*), protein maturation (*WBPI*) and protein transport (*SRP101*), nuclear architecture (*NAR1*), RNA processing (*DBD10*), nucleotide
25 metabolism (*GUK1*), chromatin structure (*RSC9*) and cell cycle control (*CDC27*). Four additional *impala160::pyrG* integrations occur into genes encoding homologues of non-essential *S. cerevisiae* proteins for which essentiality in *A. fumigatus* is not unexpected: ribosomal proteins *RPL1* and *RPL17* are duplicated in the yeast genome and therefore are not independently essential although the double mutation is lethal; a null mutation of

MSW1 encoding the yeast tryptophanyl-tRNA synthetase localized in mitochondria leads to a slow growth phenotype; and *S. cerevisiae gos1* null mutant fail to germinate at 37°C, the temperature of the lethality screen.

Two genes encoding homologues of *S. cerevisiae* proteins that are not essential for yeast growth, namely Rim11p and Yf1034w (Tables 1 and 1bis), have been identified as essential for *A. fumigatus* growth. These proteins are conserved among lower eukaryotes but their role has not been precisely evaluated yet. Analysis of the Rim11p and its *Schizosaccharomyces pombe* counterpart (*SKP1*) suggest that these protein might be involved in spore formation and for mitosis, although they are not essential for viability in these two species. That the corresponding homologues are essential in *A. fumigatus* might be explained by their implication in additional essential pathways and for discrepancies in the contribution of similar biological pathways to the biology of *A. fumigatus* and other lower eukaryotes.

The second class of mutants includes three revertants in which transposon integration occurs in the vicinity (<200 bp) of the deduced translation initiation codon of three genes which are likely to be essential for *A. fumigatus* growth based to their homology to genes essential for *S. cerevisiae* growth: *RPL14* (revertant 10-304) encodes an essential ribosomal protein and *COX10* (revertant 10-175) and *HEM15* (revertant 11-4-9) are required for heme biosynthesis (Table1). It is likely that *impala* integration prevents proper expression of these three genes but the inventors cannot exclude an additional effect on genes divergently transcribed from these intergenic regions.

Example 5: *impala* transposition characteristics.

The correlation between the parasexual genetics phenotype and the nature of the mutated genes supports the idea that genes genuinely essential for *A. fumigatus* growth can be identified among diploid heterozygous mutants. However, the proportion of *impala160::pyrG* integration in essential genes observed in this study (1.2%) is lower than expected. In *S. cerevisiae*, 17% of the 6,200 genes are essential¹³. Considering a similar frequency of essential genes in *A. fumigatus*, a genome size of 30 Mb with approximately 8000 genes, the inventors have estimated at 8 to 10% the frequency of heterozygous diploids that should have an essential phenotype after parasexual genetics.

In an attempt to understand the observed lower frequency, the inventors have characterized insertions of *impala160::pyrG* in different contexts. In fourteen diploid revertants not classified as essential but that showed an altered growth pattern on selective haploidization medium only two revertants had an insertion of *impala160::pyrG* in ORFs greater than two kb and these were not similar to known proteins. Interestingly, five *impala160::pyrG* integration (36%) were located 5' (<200 bp) of the deduced translation initiation codon of genes which have homologues in databases, including a tRNA seryl transferase essential in *S. cerevisiae*. In 18 random diploid strains with a non-essential phenotype only one transposon insertion occurred in a protein-coding region, corresponding to the homologue of the non-essential *A. nidulans amdA* gene, while five insertions (28%) were found 5' (<300 bp) of start codons of homologues of non-essential *S. cerevisiae* genes (data not shown). Similar results have been obtained upon analysis of *impala160::pyrG* integrations in a haploid *A. fumigatus* strain (data not shown). These results suggest that *impala160::pyrG* has a tendency to insert preferentially into non-coding regions thus resulting in phenotypically silent mutations as already observed for other transposons³⁴. However, the inventors positive screening by parasexual analysis enrich for insertions that lie predominantly in ORFs.

In summary, through the analysis of 2,364 *A. fumigatus* diploid insertional mutants the inventors have been able to identify 21 previously uncharacterized essential genes (SEQ ID

N°1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58,92,96,100,104,108,112,116, 120,124,128,132,136,140,144,148,152,156,160,164,168) several of which could not have been predicted as essential for *A. fumigatus* growth based on the knowledge gained from studies in other fungal species. Despite an apparent not truly random distribution of the *impala* element, transposon mutagenesis is a promising tool for insertional mutagenesis in filamentous fungi. A large scale genomic approach is now underway for the systematic identification of essential *A. fumigatus* genes by automatisation of the strategy. This represent an important step for the definition of novel antifungal treatments. Interestingly, the inventors have observed that some heterozygous diploid strains with an integration of *impala* in genes necessary for efficient growth show reduced growth compared to a parental diploid strain (data not shown). In *S. cerevisiae* or *C. albicans*, several

- heterozygous diploids with a mutation in a gene essential for growth also show reduced growth or increased sensitivity to drugs targeting the corresponding gene product^{15,35}. This phenomenon, referred to as haploinsufficiency, can form the basis for the identification of antifungal components that target the product of the mutated gene^{15,35}.
- 5 In order to achieve the results described the inventors used the following experimental protocols:

Example 6: cDNA analysis.

- 10 PCR were carried on DNA prepared from a *A. fumigatus* cDNA library in order to:
- 1) check for expression of a subset of genes identified by transposon;
 - 2) confirm the location of postulated exon/intron splice sites; and
 - 3) identify transcription start sites and polyadenylation sites.
- 15 The *A. fumigatus* cDNA library was obtained from M. Monod (CHUV, Lausanne, Switzerland). It was constructed by InVitrogen using cDNA prepared from *A. fumigatus* strain Y1090 and Lambda gT11 as the cloning vector. Following amplification, DNA of the library was prepared using the Qiagen Lambda Midi Kit.
- 20 PCR were performed on an aliquote of the prepared DNA using standard reaction conditions. PCR used universal primers (Gt11f1, Gt11f3, gt11Rev) corresponding to regions of Lambda flanking the cDNA cloning sites and primers specific to each of the candidate genes.
- 25 PCR primers used herein are listed in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Primer sequences

Oligonucleotide	5'-3' sequence	
10.175.2	GTTGGATCTTTGGGTTCTG	(SEQ ID No.72)
10.304.4	CGCGAATCTGATGACATAGC	(SEQ ID No.73)
10.4.20.2	CTCTTCGCTTCATCGTACCC	(SEQ ID No.74)
11.4.9.4	ATTAGTCCATGCGAGCATCC	(SEQ ID No.75)
11.6.20.2	GCCTGAGCCTAGTCCATCAC	(SEQ ID No.76)
2.1.1.1	CTCGCAGGTCGATTTCACTC	(SEQ ID No.77)
2.1.1.2	GGAGGAAACCTTGTCACCAC	(SEQ ID No.78)

Table 3 (continued)

2.1.1.5	TACCGAGAAGGAGGTCATGG	(SEQ ID No.79)
2.1.1.6	TCCAGTCAAGGTTGGTGATG	(SEQ ID No.80)
2.1.1.9	CGAGACCATCCTACCTCAG	(SEQ ID No.81)
4.3.4.2	ACACTCACCGCCTTAACCAC	(SEQ ID No.82)
5.3.11.2	AGTGCCCTTCATTTCAGTTCC	(SEQ ID No.83)
6.8.13.2	GCGACTTTGAGGGAATATCC	(SEQ ID No.84)
7.5.9.3	CACCACCCACCTTATGAAGC	(SEQ ID No.85)
7.5.9.4	ACCAGGAGAATCAGCGACAC	(SEQ ID No.86)
8.62.2	GGGACGAAGAATACGAGCTG	(SEQ ID No.87)
Gt11f1	CTGAATATCGACGGTTTCC	(SEQ ID No.88)
Gt11f3	GCACATTGGCTGAATATCG	(SEQ ID No.89)
Gt11Rev	TTGACACCAGACCAACTGGTAATG	(SEQ ID No.90)

The oligonucleotides that were used in the different PCR reactions are listed in Table 4 below. PCR products were gel purified using standard procedures and subjected to DNA sequencing using sequencing oligonucleotides as indicated in Table 4 below. Sequencing was performed at GenomeExpress (Grenoble, France) and Sequentia (Clermont-Ferrand, France).

Table 4. Oligonucleotides for PCR and sequencing

Gene id	March 2002	March 2003	PCR	5'	3' oligo.	sequencing oligo.
	ORF SEQ ID	ORF SEQ ID		oligo.		
CEA229_genomic	59	97	PCR1	Gt11f3	8.62.2	8.62.2
CEA232_genomic	50	109	PCR2	Gt11f1	10.175.2	10.175
CEA232_genomic	50	109	PCR3	Gt11f1	10.175.2	10.175.2
CEA234_genomic	47	117	PCR4	Gt11f3	10.304.4	10.304.4
CEA257_genomic	17	133	PCR5	2.1.1.1	2.1.1.2	2.1.1.2
CEA257_genomic	17	133	PCR6	2.1.1.5	2.1.1.6	2.1.1.5
CEA257_genomic	17	133	PCR7	2.1.1.9	Gt11Rev	2.1.1.9
CEA257_genomic	17	133	PCR8	Gt11f3	2.1.1.2	2.1.1.2
CEA261_genomic	29	149	PCR9	7.5.9.3	7.5.9.4	7.5.9.3
CEA261_genomic	29	149	PCR10	7.5.9.3	Gt11Rev	7.5.9.3
CEA265_genomic	53	165	PCR11	GT11f1	11.4.9.4	11.4.9.4

Table 4 (continued)

CEA280_genomic	173	PCR12	Gt11f3	6.8.13.2	6.8.13.2
CEA281.1_genomic/CEA281.2_genomic	177 and 181	PCR13	Gt11f3	5.3.11.2	5.3.11.2
CEA282_genomic	185 and 189	PCR14	GT11f1	10.4.20.2	10.4.20.2
CEA282_genomic	186 and 189	PCR15	GT11f3	10.4.20.2	10.4.20.2
CEA283_genomic		PCR16	GT11f1	11.6.20.2	11.6.20.2
CEA284.1_genomic/CEA284.2_genomic	194 and 198	PCR17	Gt11f1	4.3.4.2	4.3.4.2

Using this approach, we could confirm that sequences of SEQ ID N° 95, 107, 115, 131, 147, 171 are expressed in *A. fumigatus* grown in standard culture medium. Furthermore,
 5 the following results could be obtained:

1. PCR1 located the polyadenylation site 189 bp 3' of the proposed stop codon in SEQ ID N°95;
2. PCR3 located the transcription start of SEQ ID N°107, 103 bp 5' of the proposed
 10 start codon and confirmed the location of the first intron;
3. PCR4 located the transcription start site of SEQ ID N°115, 113 bp upstream of the proposed start codon, identified an intron in the 5'-untranslated region from position -84 to position -12 relative to the proposed start codon and confirmed the proposed location of the first and second introns;
- 15 4. PCR5 and PCR8 confirmed the proposed location of the first intron in SEQ ID N°131;
5. PCR6 confirmed the proposed location of the second and third introns in SEQ ID N°131;
- 20 6. PCR 7 located the polyadenylation site 106 bp 3' of the proposed stop codon in SEQ ID N°131;

7. PCR9 and PCR10 confirmed the proposed location of the third intron in SEQ ID N°147 and located two alternative polyadenylation sites 143 bp and 167 bp 3' of the proposed stop codon in SEQ ID N°147.

5 **Example 7: comparison of *A. fumigatus* EFG proteins with proteins of other fungal species.**

EFG proteins of SEQ ID 106 to SEQ ID 174 were systematically compared to the genome of *A. nidulans* using the TBLASTN algorithm, to the genome and gene set of *Magnaporthe grisea* using the TBLASTN algorithm and to the protein set of *Neurospora crassa* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* using the BLASTP algorithm.

A. nidulans sequence data were obtained from the Aspergillus Sequencing project at the Whitehead Institute for Genome Research (<http://www.genome.wi.mit.edu/annotation/fungi/aspergillus/index.html>). The first release referred to as the Monsanto release was used.

15 *M. grisea* sequence data were obtained from the Magnaporthe Sequencing Project [Ralph Dean, Fungal Genomics Laboratory at North Carolina State University (www.fungalgenomics.ncsu.edu), and Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research (www-genome.wi.mit.edu); <http://www.genome.wi.mit.edu/annotation/fungi/magnaporthe/index.html>]. Release 2.1 was used.

N. crassa sequence data were obtained from the Neurospora Sequencing Project [Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research (www-genome.wi.mit.edu); <http://www-genome.wi.mit.edu/annotation/fungi/neurospora/index.html>] Release 3 was used. *S. cerevisiae* sequence data were obtained from the Saccharomyces Genome Database (<http://genome-www.stanford.edu/Saccharomyces/>).

25 *A. nidulans*, *M. grisea*, *N. crassa* and *S. cerevisiae* closest homologues of the *A. fumigatus* EFG proteins were subsequently compared to the genome of *A. fumigatus* using the TBLASTN algorithm and the data available from the *A. fumigatus* genome project (<http://tigrblast.tigr.org/ufmg/>) in order to evaluate whether these proteins are
30 orthologues of the *A. fumigatus* EFG proteins (BDBH = yes) or are only homologues of

the *A. fumigatus* EFG proteins with an *A. fumigatus* orthologue that differs from the *A. fumigatus* EFG protein (BDBH= no).

Results presented in Table 5 below show that:

- all EFG proteins have a orthologue in the genome of *A. nidulans*
- 5 - two EFG proteins are specific to Aspergilli (SEQ ID 98 and SEQ ID 170)
- one EFG protein is specific to filamentous ascomycetes (SEQ ID 174)
- the remaining 18 EFG proteins have orthologues in all investigated species.

Consequently targets might be identified that are specific to Aspergilli, to filamentous ascomycetes or that have a broad spectrum. This analysis is reinforced by the comparison

10 that was made to human proteins, whose results are shown in Table 6 below. As expected, SEQ ID 98 and SEQ ID 174 do not have a homologue encoded by the human genome thus defining targets for antifungal drugs that would show limited side effects.

Table 5

Clone Id	March 2002 Amino acid SEQ ID	March 2003 Amino acid SEQ ID	S. cerevisiae closest homologue (p<0.01)	Protein length (aa)	Probability (e value)	Similarity	BDBH	Essential	A. nidulans homologue	BDBH	M. grisea homologue	BDBH	N. crassa homologue	BDBH
10-80	CEA 231 ₁ prot	106	DBP10/YD L031w	995	e-166	55% on 949 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C8821 (92% 347 #1-345); ANI61C3840 (69% 166 #772-934 + 83% 55 #723-777); ANI61S3472 (83% 129 #471-599 + 92% 14 #600-613); ANI61S468 (57% 132 #418-547)	yes	MG04179.1 (0.0 65% 943)	yes	NCU077 12.1 (0.0 69% 958)	yes
10-291	CEA 233 ₁ prot	114	NAR1/YN L240c	491	4E-59	48% on 465 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C10656 (74% 313 #1-273 + 77% 270 #307-574)	yes	CEA233 homologue Mgrisea (not in Mgrisea Db; contig 2.226 1621..71)	yes	NCU032 04.1 (e-159 62% 613)	yes
7-1-19	CEA 254 ₁ prot	122	GUK1/YD R454c	187	2E-62	81% on 182 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C9151 (75% 132 #2-110 + 91% 88 #111-198)	yes	MG06764.1 (6e-58 77% 183)	yes	NCU063 00.1 (1e-61 78% 181)	yes
10-3-7	CEA 255 ₁ prot	126	SRP101/Y DR292c	621	e-102	62% on 431 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C10591 (77% 346 #168-513 + 86% 160 #502-658); ANI61C6709 (80% 149 #1-129)	yes	MG02663.1 (0.0 67% 654)	yes	NCU006 25.1 (e-174 67% 620)	yes
2-6-4	CEA 256 ₁ prot	130	WP1/YE L002c	430	2E-37	46% on 432 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C5302 (69% 520 #1-460)	yes	MG02821.1 (e-125 66% 465)	yes	NCU006 69.1 (e-128 64% 469)	yes

Table 5 (continued)

2-1-1	CEA 257 prot	18	134	YGL245w	724	0.0	67% on 622 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C10340 (83% 624 #92-715); ANI61C6256 (82% 62 #1-62)	yes	MG05956.1 (0.0 69% 633)	yes	NCU088 94.1 (0.0 72% 631)
2-10- 16	CEA 258 prot	21	138	CDC27/YB L084c	758	4E-71	63% on 304 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C8961 (84% 402 #390-786 + 55% 229 #171- 399 + 63% 53 #119-171); ANI61C6854 (87% 114 #1- 114)	yes	MG06292.1 (e-174 57% 821)	yes	NCU002 13.1 (e- 173 57% 820)
5-4- 21	CEA 259 prot	24	142	RSC9/YM L127w	581	5E-29	45% on 414 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C10567 (92% 382 #1- 382); ANI61C1244 (81% 144 #425-568)	yes	MG02493.1 (6e-61 51% 470)	yes	NCU038 92.1 (7e- 66 52% 478)
2-10- 21	CEA 260 prot	27	146	SPE2/YOL 052c	396	1E-54	51% on 462 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C9610 (82% 247 #39- 273 + 80% 236 #264-491 + 94% 36 #6-41)	yes	MG10635.1 (e-143 67% 479)	yes	NCU010 83.1 (e- 163 71% 502)
7-5-9	CEA 261 prot	30	150	RPL17A/Y KL180w RPL17B/Y JL177w	136	5E-40	92% on 115 aa	yes	no	ANI61C1126 (96% 70 #50- 119 + 77% 69 #8-72)	yes	MG04114.1 (3e-57 96% 118)	yes	NCU070 14.1 (3e- 58 86% 139)
10-2- 18	CEA 262 prot	33	154	RPL1A/Y GL135w RPL1B/Y L220w	255	9E-86	86% on 238 aa	yes	no	ANI61C3974 (96% 170 #43- 212 + 94% 50 #207-256)	yes	MG06919.1 (e-116 93% 238)	yes	NCU014 52.1 (e- 114 91% 241)
9-11	CEA 230 prot	36	102	MSW1/YD R268w	379	2E-26	43% on 154 aa	yes	no	ANI61C6741 (79% 150 #249-398 + 84% 93 #53-145 + 56% 140 #137-249)	yes	MG00474.1 (6e-85 64% 351)	yes	NCU001 13.1 (e- 101 67% 374)

Table 5 (continued)

4-3-3	CEA 263- prot	39	158	GOS1/YH L031c	223	8E-31	60% on 224 aa	yes	no	ANI61C8624 (93% 172 #56- 227 + 91% 38 #23-60)	yes	MG04454.1 (5e-71 76% 226)	yes	NCU027 06.1 (7e- 74 78% 224)
11-6- 11	CEA 264- prot	42	162	RIM11/Y MR139w	370	e-104	77% on 323 aa	no	no	ANI61C8742 (74% 246 #16- 217 + 87% 33 #215-247 + 93% 15 #1-15); ANI61C11836 (79% 108 #263-350 + 88% 44 #351- 394)	yes	MG03972.1 (0.0 93% 394)	yes	NCU041 85.1 (0.0 92% 394)
8-47	CEA 228- prot	45	94	YFL034w	1074	5E-42	60% on 248 aa	no	no	ANI61C7512 (75% 306 #374-679); ANI61C7189 (49% 225 #1-217)	yes	MG08873.1 (1e-69 73% 240)	yes	NCU016 72.1 (2e- 89 50% 631)
10- 304	CEA 234- prot	48	118	RPL14A/Y HL001w RPL14B/Y KL006w	138	1E-24	63% on 130 aa	yes	no	ANI61C6709 (90% 90 #43- 132 + 79% 55 #1-55)	yes	MG02659.1 (3e-40 70% 132)	yes	NCU006 34.1 (5e- 35 38% 132)
10- 175	CEA 232- prot	51	110	HEM15/Y ORI76w	393	e-112	71% on 352 aa	yes	yes	ANI61C8249 (94% 200 #79- 278 + 56% 132 #1-132)	yes	MG01513.1 (e-172 78% 420)	yes	NCU082 91.1 (e- 175 79% 422)
11-4- 9	CEA 265- prot	54	166	COX10/YP L172c	462	1E-45	43% on 341 aa	yes	no	ANI61C1412 (50% 301 #20- 320)	yes	MG05944.1 (2e-79 52% 351)	yes	NCU061 41.1 (6e- 81 51% 351)

Table 5 (continued)

2-10-18	CEA 266- prot	57	170	no hit found				ANI61C1220 (57% 305 #233-537)	yes	MG00073.1 (9 e- 06 39% 254)	no	NCU055 88.1 (2e- 07 37% 289)	no
8-62	CEA 229- prot	60	98	no hit found				ANI61C3462 (72% 472 #237-707 + 68% 59 #710- 768); ANI61C1809 (63% 179 #762-926); ANI61C9531 (80% 97 #7- 103)	yes	no hit found	ND	no hit found	ND
6-8-13	CEA 280- prot		174	no hit found				ANI61C5802 (68% 182 #15- 190)	yes	MG0487.1 (6e-11 45% 175)	yes	NCU099 96.1 (1e- 11 46% 175)	yes
5-3-11	CEA 281. 1_pr ot		178	PAC2/YER 007w	518	8.4 e-14	50% fragmented	ANI61C7709 (76% 206 #280-482 + 74% 146 #60- 205 + 96% 53 #6-58)	yes	MG00378.1 (2e-95 51% 641)	yes	NCU091 39.1 (2e- 98 50% 634)	yes
5-3-11	CEA 281. 2_pr ot		182	no hit found				ANI61C868 (72% 169 #47- 211)	yes	MG07998.1 (2e-48 52% 300)	yes	NCU040 32.1 (5e- 42 48% 355)	yes
10-4-20	CEA 282. 1_pr ot		186	PBP2/YBR 233w	413	2.1 e-26	50% fragmented	ANI61C4164 (79% 205 #1- 200 + 82% 158 171-328); ANI61C6581 (55% 142 #323-464)	yes	MG00514.1 (e-125 60% 485)	yes	NCU092 37.1 (e- 131 60% 492)	yes
10-4-20	CEA 282. 2_pr ot		190	SEC3/YER 008c	1337	2.2 e-05	44% on 277 aa	ANI61C11139 (67% 281 #64-344); ANI61C4164 (71% 60 #1-60)	yes	MG00515.1 (2e-41 50% 315)	yes	NCU092 38.1 (4e- 36 49% 334)	yes

Table 5 (continued)

4-3-4	CEA 284. 1 _{pr} ot	195	ENAS/YDR 038c	1091	2.5 e-260	65% fragmented	yes	no	ANI61C1006 (88% 336 #429-760 + 86% 260 #167- 426 + 78% 190 #1-169); ANI61C1748 (84% 212 #851-1059 + 95% 73 #781- 853)	yes	MG10730.1 (0.0 72% 1072)	yes	NCU050 46.1 (0.0 74% 1038)
4-3-4	CEA 284. 2 _{pr} ot	199	no hit found						ANI61C8195 (39% 126 #232-350); ANI61C3069 (63% 56 #35-90)	yes	MG10932.1 (2e-08 40% 117)	no	NCU007 23.1 (3e- 07 37% 106)

Table 6

Clone Id	Protein Id	March 2002 Amino acid SEQ ID	March 2003 Amino acid SEQ ID	Nearest human homologue at the integratuion of site <i>imp160::pyrG</i>	Probability	Protein Length (aa)	Identity (%)	Similary (%)	Human protein Ref
10-80	CEA231_ prot	3	106	ATP-dependent RNA helicase	e-123	882	261/594 (43%)	353/594 (58%)	NP_07697 7.2
10-291	CEA233_ prot	6	114	protein related to Narf	4E-59	476	168/474 (35%)	216/474 (45%)	NP_07193 8.1
7-1-19	CEA254_ prot	9	122	guanylate kinase 1	5E-52	197	98/179 (54%)	131/179 (72%)	NP_00084 9.1
10-3-7	CEA255_ prot	12	126	signal recognition particle receptor	1E-88	638	232/668 (34%)	334/668 (49%)	NP_00313 0.1

Table 6 (continued)

2-6-4	CEA256_ prot	15	130	dolichyl-diphosphooligosaccharide- protein glycosyltransferase	4E-45	456	124/423 (29%)	213/423 (50%)	NP_00520 7.2
2-1-1	CEA257_ prot	18	134	glutamyl-prolyl tRNA synthetase	e-135	1440	260/614 (42%)	372/614 (60%)	NP_00443 7.1
2-10-16	CEA258_ prot	21	138	cell division cycle protein 27	5E-81	824	168/465 (36%)	257/465 (55%)	NP_00124 7.2
5-4-21	CEA259_ prot	24	142	zinc finger protein of the cerebellum 2	0.001	532	28/102 (27%)	37/102 (35%)	NP_00906 0.2
2-10-21	CEA260_ prot	27	146	S-adenosylmethionine decarboxylase 1	5E-50	334	140/447 (31%)	215/447 (47%)	NP_00162 5.1
7-5-9	CEA261_ prot	30	150	ribosomal protein S17; 40S ribosomal protein	1E-36	135	85/119 (71%)	98/119 (81%)	NP_00101 2.1
10-2-18	CEA262_ prot	33	154	ribosomal protein S3a; 40S ribosomal protein	1E-76	264	151/246 (61%)	190/246 (76%)	NP_00099 7.1
9-11	CEA230_ prot	36	102	tryptophanyl tRNA synthetase 2 (mitochondrial)	7E-27	360	64/183 (34%)	104/183 (55%)	NP_05665 1.1
4-3-3	CEA263_ prot	39	158	golgi SNAP receptor complex member 1; Golgi SNARE	6E-21	250	67/247 (27%)	125/247 (50%)	NP_00486 2.1
11-6-11	CEA264_ prot	42	162	glycogen synthase kinase 3 beta	e-137	433	241/352 (68%)	281/352 (79%)	NP_00208 4.2
8-47	CEA228_ prot	45	94	hypothetical protein	6E-28	421	69/188 (36%)	100/188 (52%)	CAB39107 .1
8-62	CEA229_ prot	60	98	no hit found					
6-8-13	CEA280_ prot		174	no hit found					

Table 6 (continued)

5-3-11	CEA281.1_prot	178	beta-tubulin cofactor E	5E-29	527	75/199 (37%)	108/199 (54%)	91/211 (43%)	NP_00318 4.1
5-3-11	CEA281.2_prot	182	WW domain-containing binding protein 21	0.020	376	22/64 (34%)	36/64 (56%)		NP_00911 8.1
10-4-20	CEA282.1_prot	186	poly(rC) binding protein I; heterogenous nuclear ribonucleoprotein X	1E-14	356	59/194 (30%)	96/194 (49%)		NP_00618 7.1
10-4-20	CEA282.2_prot	190	no hit found						
4-3-4	CEA284.2_prot	199	no hit found						

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